



## RECENT ESSAYS

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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# RECENT ESSAYS

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF NOTES  
FOR THE USE OF STUDENTS

BY

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## NOTE

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# RECENT ESSAYS

## INTRODUCTION

WHEN first we find the word "Essay" in English it was used, as the Oxford Dictionary tells us, to imply a certain want of finish, whereas now it is used "of a composition more or less elaborate in style though limited in range" The essential characteristics of an essay, as everyday opinion conceives them, are that it is short, that it is in prose, and that it deals more or less completely with a subject or with a definite part of a subject But this conventional definition, though useful till it breaks down, must not be pressed closely The name of Charles Lamb will suggest that we must not speak of completeness of treatment as in any way essential Locke wrote a well-known "Essay concerning Humane Understanding" which would certainly not square with the popular conception And, as all the world knows, Pope's "Essay on Man" is in verse Prize essays at the Universities often appear as substantial volumes and of the nature of ordinary treatises in regard to content, though the scope is supposed to be confined On the other hand, if the student is fortunate enough to possess a copy of Mark Pattison's *Essays*, and will turn to that on "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688-1750," he will find a very considerable history of a very important subject, undeniably in essay form Indeed it would seem to be that if we are to lay down any hard-and-fast rules, we must refuse the title where it has often been given and apply it where it has not been applied by the author Perhaps it is better to say with Bacon, as the lexicographer does, that the word is late but the thing is ancient. We may, however, certainly

dispense with any notion of incompleteness or "want of finish" as connected with the essay. It is usually polished with the utmost care, and any wandering thoughts and disjointed phrases are, we may be sure, evidences of the art which conceals its own existence.

The pithy treatment of a defined subject, call it by what name we will, must necessarily be as old as literature, and it would be possible to trace the existence of such essays in the English literature of the sixteenth century. But the most famous example, indeed the first to which the word is applied, is that connected with the illustrious name of Bacon, and he probably obtained the idea not so much from any previous attempts of a similar kind in English as from the well-known essays of the Frenchman, Montaigne. Bacon's weighty and pregnant style, to which perhaps sufficient justice has hardly been done by those who treat of the history of English prose, rendered him a master of the art which is necessary for such compositions. To Bacon seems to be due the tradition of condensed and pointed phrase, an echo of Tacitus to some extent, which has never been entirely lost sight of by later authors, it may fairly be said that while the more florid efforts of decorative writers will always attract, the terse and finished English of those who follow simpler and bolder models will in the end carry the day. The student will find in the prose of Dr. Garnett an excellent example of this beautiful and effective restraint.

The growth of the essay in English can be clearly seen in the seventeenth century. We have the "Descriptions of Characters", we have Fuller and Sir Thomas Browne, we have some of the prose work of Milton and Cowley, and we have the powerful, reasoned prose of Dryden. It was, indeed, Dryden who may be considered as the forerunner of the eighteenth-century essayists, and it must at once be said that few of them equalled him. The writings of Sir William Temple, which make dreary reading after Dryden however, have been considered to form a link with the age of Anne.

The essay now attains great importance, aided as it is by the foundation of the periodical press in its modern

form It has not always been easy to distinguish essays from pamphlets, and hence it is difficult to assign the proper rank to Defoe. But it is clear that there was a large and ever-widening circle of people who wished to read something at once fairly light and instructive We must not judge past ages by our own To us even the essays which appear in the *Tatler*, the *Spectator* and the *Guardian* often seem heavy and commonplace They deal with a world long gone by, and they appeal to sentiments and opinions and modes of thought and modes of study with which we are unfamiliar Set a young clergyman of to-day to read South's sermons or Samuel Clarke on the Being and Attributes of God, and he will find it far from a light task, yet this sort of reading was what the divine of the early eighteenth century delighted in—that is to say, if he read at all The *Spectator* was a welcome guest in the country house and the vicarage when there were very few books, no novels, and no newspapers to vary the monotony of life Can we wonder that it was read with eagerness and worn to tatters by being lent to a large number of neighbours?

There is a brightness, almost, it has been said, a dramatic touch, about the essays of Steele and Addison which is wanting in those of the men who followed them The ponderous foot of Dr Johnson trod heavily, and his *Rambler* and *Idler* repose on the dusty shelves of old libraries, consulted occasionally by the curious and then hastily replaced Still, they pleased the quiet, thoughtful men of their day, who liked the direct homely and the strong and sensible if somewhat gloomy morality which they preached Goldsmith was a far finer writer than his friend, as he showed in his "Citizen of the World," and when we reach Hume we are very near to our own way of thinking His later essays, as Sir James FitzJames Stephen, himself one of the most powerful and suggestive essayists of the Victorian era, says, "are perfect models of quiet, vigorous and yet graceful composition, as full of thought as any writings need to be, yet never so much compressed as to impose needless labour on the reader As to their intellectual merits, it is almost superfluous to praise them They are the most complete, the most



powerful, and, in essentials, though not always in language, the most accurate pieces of mental workmanship which the last century produced in Scotland. They contain the germ of all the most active and fruitful speculations of our own day, it is curious, in reading them over, to see how very little subsequent speculation has added to a great part of what Hume wrote." This is high but not undeserved praise. A student going to the wilds for a long vacation could not better employ the tedium of vacant hours than in reading these able and suggestive papers. If he will also take with him the *Horæ Sabbaticæ* of the writer just mentioned, he will see certain resemblances between the mind of the critic and that of the famous Scottish philosopher.

The early nineteenth century, with its countless opportunities in the way of periodical literature, saw an enormous stimulus given to the writing of essays. The demand was great, and the supply was various in quality, most of it has long been forgotten. Of the vast number of essays by which Southey so honourably and laboriously made his daily bread, not one is now read through, though his style was easy and he bore the weight of considerable learning without much apparent effort. What influence he had was confined to his contemporaries. Leigh Hunt is still read. It is hard to say why, for his was a second-rate, commonplace mind, his personal association with greater men seems to have given him a higher valuation than he deserved. One thing is clear, and that is that the public taste changed, and, as we think, improved very rapidly. The rise into prominence of the novel, the great literary feature of the first half of the nineteenth century, had its natural effect. The reading world no longer wished for dull common-sense or complacent piety, and it was beginning to think that there were perhaps after all some things that wanted altering in what had hitherto been regarded by the average Englishman as the best possible of worlds. The burning resolve to throw oneself into one's book such as Charlotte Brontë showed in *Jane Eyre*, the humour and pathos of everyday life as it was portrayed in the vast gallery of Dickens, the dramatic possibilities of other times

as revealed by the artistic skill of Scott, and later of Thackeray, the intense emotional feeling which was for the first time since the seventeenth century beginning to be expressed by the poets, and the thrill of devotion and call to greater personal sacrifice which characterised the various religious movements of the time, all had their influence on the essay.

The essayists were now naturally connected with certain periodicals, and their articles more often than not took the form of reviews of books, though it need hardly be stated that, when once they got started, the book which served for a text was sometimes forgotten. In the *Edinburgh Review* wrote Jeffrey, its founder and for many years its editor, Sydney Smith, and Lord Brougham. A far more celebrated contributor was Macaulay, whose style has been the battle-ground of critics for nearly a century. We are apt when we criticise him to forget what he really did. Macaulay's great achievement—a very remarkable one in his day—was that of teaching and glorifying the Whig doctrine of politics to his fellow-citizens. Here, again, we must remember that he wrote for an age that is past and dead, and it is quite useless to condemn him because he fails to convince us. But as a popular essayist, as measured by the number of his readers, the pleasure that he gave them and the extent of his influence, Macaulay stands unrivalled. His blows seem to us unnecessarily hard, especially when we compare them with the more delicate thrusts of John Stuart Mill, and his partisanship and unconscious dishonesty are often terribly obvious. But we in our day have become more indifferent and more polite. We are uncertain about so many things, and hence we feel that our opponents may be more than half right. The early Victorians had none of this spirit. They wanted, it has been said, to win the world for Christ, for the Whigs, for the Charter, or for High Toryism, and they were very merciless. We find this spirit in the *Edinburgh Reviewers*, and we find it in the *Quarterly Reviewers*, in Gifford and Croker and even in Scott. We also find it amongst the boisterous Tories who supped with John Wilson and who made *Blackwood's Magazine* so famous. And these various

publications represented also the men for whom they were written, and hence offered a firm and sometimes a ferocious opposition to things they could not understand, whether it was the railway train or the Romantic Movement.

Charles Lamb, who wrote chiefly for the *London Magazine*, was an essayist of a very different stamp. He is distinguished at once by a singular and characteristic style which no one has been able to imitate, by a keen critical faculty, and by a humorous imagination which bids fair to keep his fame green for all time. Added to this, we have a charming personality, revealed in his letters and often reflected in his essays, which indeed forms the secret of their marvellous attractiveness. What is less often noticed is a certain reserve of power which gives a kindly yet unmistakable authority to whatever he has to say. His contemporary, William Hazlitt, was also an essayist of high qualities, and, if he has not so delightful and good-tempered a personality to display, is a fine critic and a man of interesting if unfortunate life. With him, though on a still lower plane, compares Godwin, whose position as father-in-law to Shelley has dragged into prominence the squalid details of a not over-worthy life. We can only, when we think over Hazlitt and Godwin, ask ourselves whether, had our circumstances been the same, we should have come out of the trial as well as they did.

Two other men also of this time stand out from the crowd of essay writers, if one can be called an essayist at all. They differed profoundly from each other, and yet each had a marked influence on the prose writers who followed. De Quincey, a poor, flimsy, clinging creature in actual life, was the master of an extraordinarily florid style which has always been described as distinctly lyric in quality. The *Imaginary Conversations* of Landor possess a deep interest for the student of the history of the essay, the standard of what was noble and severe in English prose could never be the same after the publication of these glorious dialogues as it was before they appeared.

The power of impressing a strong and not altogether attractive personality upon the floating mass of contemporary opinion was never perhaps exercised with greater

effect than it was by Carlyle. It was by his extraordinarily personal appeal that he caught and kept the ear of his fellow-men. Part of his success was no doubt due to his doctrine, which told of the need of strength, of conviction, of silence and of force. He taught the supreme importance of duty, the shortness of the day and the length of the night which is to follow, the sacredness of work and the small consideration we ought to give to shams and pleasure and our creature comforts. It is a doctrine full of contradictions, but it made a flattering and a noble appeal to the young. It showed them a life of high possibility and consecration. It gave dignity to the commonplace. It fitted in with the vague dreams of 1830 and 1848. The message was conveyed in histories, biographies and essays, and perhaps as an essayist, and especially where the essays take the form of reviews, Carlyle is at his best. His style is his own, eccentric and personal to a degree. We, who have got used to it, consider it as lawless and often harsh. We like best those books, such as the *Life of Sterling*, in which it is least strongly marked. But it is very wonderful, it arrests and holds the attention, and is in itself one of the many marks of original genius in the man whose powerful thought it conveys.

Dickens and Thackeray were essayists of great power and popularity, and Ruskin occupies a very prominent place amongst the confraternity. Of Ruskin it is rather difficult to estimate the influence, because of the exaggerated form in which his doctrine was conveyed. But much of his artistic criticism will live, and his attempt to apply the higher notions of chivalry to the conditions of modern life has undoubtedly done something towards setting up a new ideal before the democratic society of our day. We need not stay to inquire how much of the message is original. We had better notice the honesty of feeling which characterises it, and the wonderful beauty of the language in which it is conveyed.

The writers who are connected with the Oxford Movement made a very important contribution to the literature of England as well as taking part in a tragedy as moving

as any to be seen on the stage. Among them Newman stands supreme, and he who would know what English prose can be at its best must spend much time over his sermons and the *Apologia*. There are essays, too, by him of great interest and beauty. The subjects of which Newman treats may not, excepting where they concern his own mental or religious history, have much attraction for us now, but the energy, the delicacy and the quiet pathos of his style make him one of the greatest masters of our language. The same features may be traced in the work of Dean Church and Thomas Mozley, who worthily supported the same opinions. James Mozley had his part too in "the passages of those times," but his influence is due rather to the force of his powerful intellect than to any special graces of style.

These men wrote because they had something to say. They were careless as to how they said it, but grace came naturally because they were men of genius. The task of writing with conscious care, the elaborate choice of words, the cultivation of the art of writing as something of great value for its own sake, this belongs to another school of writers. It is a school which includes men like Pater, John Addington Symonds, Swinburne, Stevenson and Sir Walter Raleigh. They were great artists, and if there is occasionally the sense of effort, and the echo of preparation, in their essays, the result may be said to justify the toil. Bagehot, a man of great originality of mind, belongs to no such coterie, but his brilliance throws new light on everything that he touches. Those who wish to gain new angles of vision, to find what they have often vaguely thought reduced to a clever and pointed phrase, will gladly turn to his essays.

But indeed almost all the great Victorian writers have been essayists at some time or other. Amongst historians we have Lord Acton, Sir James Stephen and his two brilliant sons, Forster, Froude, Creighton, Maine, Stubbs. Amongst philosophers may be mentioned Mill, Hamilton and T. H. Green. Scholars have furnished many recruits, Mark Pattison, Myers, and Jebb may serve as examples. Theologians number men like Lightfoot, Westcott, and Boyd, if we can call Boyd in any sense a theologian.

Matthew Arnold was at once one of our greatest poets and greatest essayists. These amongst many others, the difficulty is one of selection.

At the present day the essay reigns supreme, no other form of literature, with the exception perhaps of the successful novel, secures so many readers. We live in an age of decadence so far as literary production is concerned, and we have comparatively few original writers of any power or force. We have hardly any poets, still fewer historians, but one or two great writers of fiction, no biographers of genius. Hence the world delights to have books about books, delights to read collections of essays. We have no Shelleys and no Coleridges now, but we can read about the real ones, and the art of writing interestingly about others has well-nigh reached perfection. That it is so is largely due to the want of leisure on the part of the reading public and the editorial skill of those who conduct our newspapers and magazines, coupled, of course, as has been said, with the striking absence of works of great genius. It is possible that the demand for the second-best has in some cases checked the production of something higher, that a man like Richard Garnett could have given us more of what was really himself had he not had to spend his time in measuring the products of other people's brains seems at least possible.

The essays which make up this volume have been chosen from the works of present-day writers of widely different standpoint. Indeed they only resemble each other in this, that their authors are, or have been, all popular writers, popular with certain large groups of readers. The choice was, in fact, made so that the student could realise what the mental food of the everyday man of education is in England at the present time. It must not be thought that the selection is at all completely representative, that it could not possibly be. Nor must it be thought that the ordinary person is content with essays such as those which are found here. He is not, and evidence is showing us that the better education becomes in the country, the greater is the appreciation of the classics of our language, and the better judges are the people of what constitutes real and

abiding genius Which of the writers whose essays appear here will join that select band, only time can show It would hardly be becoming in an editor to give his opinion, he can only recommend students to form, and, if necessary, to give theirs

Dr Hugh Walker's book<sup>1</sup> on the history of the Essay in England will be found useful by students and teachers alike It combines careful study and enthusiasm in a very striking manner

<sup>1</sup> J M. Dent & Sons

# I

## RALPH WALDO EMERSON

By RICHARD GARNETT

"NOTEWORTHY also," says Carlyle, "and serviceable for the progress of this same individual, wilt thou find his subdivision into generations"

It is indeed the fact that the course of human history admits of being marked off into periods, which, from their average duration and the impulse communicated to them by those who enter upon adolescence along with them, may be fitly denominated generations, especially when their opening and closing are signalised by great events which serve as historical landmarks. No such event indeed, short of the Day of Judgment or a universal deluge, can serve as an absolute line of demarcation, nothing can be more certain than that history and human life are a perpetual Becoming, and that although the progress of development is frequently so startling and unforeseen as to evoke the poet's exclamation -

"New endless growth surrounds on every side,  
Such as we deemed not earth could ever bear,"

this growth is but development, after all. The association of historical periods with stages in the mental development of man is nevertheless too convenient to be surrendered; the vision is cleared and the grasp strengthened by the perception of a well-defined era in American history, commencing with the election of Andrew Jackson to the Presidency in 1828 and closing with the death of Abraham Lincoln in 1865, a period exactly corresponding with one in English history measured from the death of Lord Liverpool, the typical representative of a bygone political era, in the former year, to that of Lord Palmerston, another



such representative, in the latter The epoch thus bounded almost precisely corresponds to the productive period of the two great men who, more than any of their contemporaries, have stood in the conscious attitude of teachers of their age With such men as Tennyson and Browning, vast as their influence has been, the primary impulse has not been didactic, but artistic, Herbert Spencer, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, and others, have been chiefly operative upon the succeeding generation, Mill and the elder Newman rather address special classes than the people at large, and Ruskin and Kingsley would have willingly admitted that, however eloquent the expression of their teaching, its originality mainly consisted in the application of Carlyle's ideas to subjects beyond Carlyle's range Carlyle and Emerson, therefore, stand forth like Goethe and Schiller as the Dioscuri of their period, the two men to whom beyond others its better minds looked for guidance, and who had the largest share in forming the minds from which the succeeding generation was to take its complexion Faults and errors they had, but on the whole it may be said that nations have rarely been more fortunate in their instructors than the two great English-speaking peoples during the age of Carlyle and Emerson Of Carlyle this is not the place to speak further, but writing on Emerson, it will be necessary to exhibit what we conceive to have been the special value of his teaching, and to attempt some description of the man himself in vindication of the high place claimed for him

It has been said of some great man of marked originality that his was the sole voice among many echoes This cannot be said of Emerson's, his age was by no means deficient in original voices But it may be said with truth to have been the chief vocal utterance in an age of authorship It is a trite remark that many of the men of thought whose ideas have most influenced the world have shown little inclination for literary composition The president of a London freethinking club in Goldsmith's time supposed himself to be in possession of the works of Socrates, no less than those of Tully and Cicero, but no other trace of their existence has come to light.

Had Emerson lived in any age but his own it is doubtful whether, any more than Socrates, he would have figured as an author "I write," he tells Carlyle, "with very little system, and, as far as regards composition, with most fragmentary result—paragraphs incomprehensible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle" We also hear of his going forth into the woods to hunt a thought as a boy might hunt a butterfly, except that the thought had flown with him from home, and that his business was not so much to capture it as to materialise it and make it tangible This peculiarity serves to classify Emerson among the ancient sages, men like Socrates and Buddha, whose instructions were not merely oral but unmethodical and unsystematic, who spoke as the casual emergency of the day dictated, and left their observations to be collected by their disciples An excellent plan in so far as it insures the endowment of the sage's word with his own individuality, exceptionable when a doubt arises whether the utterance belongs to the master or the disciple, and, in the case of diametrically opposite versions, whether Socrates has been represented more truly by the prose of Xenophon or the poetry of Plato We may be thankful that the spirit of Emerson's age, and the exigencies of his own affairs, irresistibly impelled him to write, nevertheless the fact remains that with him Man Thinking is not so much Man Writing as Man Speaking, and that although the omnipotent machinery of the modern social system caught him too, and forced him into line with the rest, we have in him a nearer approach to the voice, apart from the disturbing and modifying effect of literary composition, than in any other eminent modern thinker This annuls one of the most weighty criticisms upon Emerson, so long as he is regarded merely as an author—his want of continuity and consequent want of logic Had he attempted to establish a philosophical system, this would have been fatal But such an undertaking is of all things furthest from his thoughts He does not seek to demonstrate he announces Ideas have come to him which, as viewed by the inward light, appear important and profitable He brings these forward to be tested by the light of other

men He does not seek to connect these ideas together, except in so far as their common physiognomy bespeaks their common parentage Nor does he seek to fortify them by reasoning, or subject them to any test save the faculty by which the unprejudiced soul discerns good from evil If his jewel will scratch glass, it is sufficiently evinced a diamond

It follows that although Emerson did not write most frequently or best in verse, he is, as regards the general constitution of the intellect, rather to be classed with poets than with philosophers Poetry cannot indeed dispense with the accurate observation of nature and mankind, but poetic genius essentially depends on intuition and inspiration There is no gulf between the philosopher and the poet, some of the greatest of poets have also been among the most powerful of reasoners, but their claim to poetical rank would not have been impaired if their ratiocination had been ever so illogical Similarly, a great thinker may have no more taste for poetry than was vouchsafed to Darwin or the elder Mill without any impeachment of his power of intellect The two spheres of action are fundamentally distinct, though the very highest geniuses, such as Shakespeare and Goethe, have sometimes almost succeeded in making them appear as one To determine to which of them a man actually belongs, we must look beyond the externalities of literary form, and inquire whether he obtains his ideas by intuition, or by observation and reflection No mind will be either entirely intuitive or entirely reflective, but there will usually be a decided inclination to one or other of the processes, and in the comparatively few cases in which thoughts and feelings seem to come to it unconsciously, as leaves to a tree, we may consider that we have a poet, though perhaps not a writer of poetry If indeed the man writes at all, he will very probably write prose, but this prose will be impregnated with poetic quality From this point of view we are able to set Emerson much higher than if we regarded him simply as a teacher He is greater as the American Wordsworth than the American Carlyle We shall understand his position best by comparing him

with other men of genius who are poets too, but not pre-eminently so. In beauty of language and power of imagination, John Henry Newman and James Martineau, though they have written little in verse, yield to few poets. But throughout all their writings the didactic impulse is plainly the preponderating one, their poetry merely auxiliary and ornamental, hence they are not reckoned among poets. With Emerson the case is reversed. the revealer is first in him, the reasoner second, oral speech is his most congenial form of expression, and he submits to appear in print because the circumstances of his age render print the most effectual medium for the dissemination of his thought. It will be observed that whenever possible he resorts to the medium of oration or lecture; it may be further remarked that his essays, often originally delivered as lectures, are very like his discourses, and his discourses very like his essays. In neither, so far as regards the literary form of the entire composition, distinguished from the force and felicity of individual sentences, can he be considered as a classic model. The essay need not be too severely logical, yet a just conception of its nature requires a more harmonious proportion and more symmetrical construction, as well as a more consistent and intelligent direction towards a single definite end, than we usually find in Emerson. The orator is less easy to criticise than the essayist, for oratory involves an element of personal magnetism which resists all critical analysis. Hence posterity frequently reverses (or rather seems to reverse, for the decision upon a speech mutilated of voice and action cannot be really conclusive) the verdicts of contemporaries upon oratory. "What will our descendants think of the Parliamentary oratory of our age?" asked a contemporary of Burke's, "when they are told that in his own time this man was accounted neither the first nor the second nor even the third speaker?" Transferred to the tribunal of the library, Burke's oratory bears away the palm from Pitt and Fox and Sheridan, yet, unless we had heard the living voices of them all, it would be unsafe for us to challenge the contemporary verdict. We cannot say, with the lover in Goethe, that the word printed appears

dull and soulless, but it certainly wants much which conduced to the efficacy of the word spoken .

" Ach ! wie traurig sieht in Lettern,  
Schwartz auf weiss, das Lied mich an,  
Das aus deinem Mund vergöttern  
Das ein Herz zerreißen kann ! "

Emerson's orations are no less delightful and profitable reading than his essays, so long as they can be treated as his essays were intended to be treated when they came into print, that is, read deliberately, with travellings backward when needed, and frequent pauses of thought. But if we consider them as discourses to be listened to, we shall find some difficulty in reconciling their popularity and influence with their apparent disconnectedness, and some reason to apprehend that, occasional flashes of epigram excepted, they must speedily have passed from the minds of the hearers. The apparent defect was probably remedied in delivery by the magnetic power of the speaker, not that sort of power which "wields at will the fierce democracy," but that which convinces the hearer that he is listening to a message from a region not as yet accessible to himself. The impassioned orator usually provokes the suspicion that he is speaking from a brief. Not so Emerson. Above all other speakers, he inspires the confidence that he declares a thing to be, not because he wishes, but because he perceives it to be so. His quiet, unpretending, but perfectly unembarrassed manner, as of a man with a message which he simply delivers and goes away, must have greatly aided to supply the absence of vigorous reasoning and skilful oratorical construction. We could not expect a spirit commissioned to teach us to condescend to such methods, and Emerson's discourse, whether in oration or essay, though by no means deficient in human feeling or of the "blessed Glendoveer" order, frequently does sound like that of a being from another sphere, simply because he derived his ideas from a higher world, as must always be the case with the man of spiritual, not of course with the man of practical genius. It matters nothing whether this is really so,

or whether what wears the aspect of imparted revelation is but a fortifying of the natural eye, qualifying it to look a little deeper than neighbouring eyes into things around. In either case the person so endowed stands a degree nearer to the essential truth of things than his fellows, and the consciousness of the fact, transpiring through his personality, gives him a weight which might otherwise seem inexplicable. Nothing can be more surprising than the deference with which the learned and intelligent contemporaries of the humble and obscure Spinoza resort to his judgment before he has so much as written a book.

This estimate of Emerson as an American Wordsworth, one who, like Wordsworth, not merely enforced but practically demonstrated the proposition that.

" One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can,"

is controverted by many who can see in him nothing but a polisher and stringer of epigrammatic sayings. It is impossible to argue with any who cannot recognise the deep vitality of "Nature," of the two series of essays first published, and of most of the early orations and discourses; but it may be conceded that Emerson's fountain of inspiration was no more perennial than Wordsworth's, and that in his later years it was mainly his gift of epigrammatic statement that enabled him to avoid both the Scylla and the Charybdis of men of genius whose fount of inspiration has run low. In some such cases, such as Wordsworth's, the author simply goes on producing, with less and less geniality at every successive effort. In others, such as Browning's, he escapes inanity by violent exaggeration of his characteristic mannerisms. Neither of these remarks applies to Emerson: he does not, in ceasing to be original, become insipid, nor can it be said that he is any more mannered at the last than at the first. This is a clear proof that his peculiarity of speech is not mannerism but manner, that consequently he is not an artificial writer, and that, since the treatment of his themes

as he has chosen to treat them admits of no compromise between nature and rhetoric, he has the especial distinction of simplicity where simplicity is difficult and rare. That such is the case will appear from an examination of his earlier and more truly prophetic writings.

Of these, the first in importance as in time is the tract "Nature," commenced in 1833, rewritten, completed, and published in 1836. Of all Emerson's writings this is the most individual, and the most adapted for a general introduction to his ideas. These ideas are not in fact peculiar to him, and yet the little book is one of the most original ever written, and one of those most likely to effect an intellectual revolution in the mind capable of apprehending it. The reason is mainly the intense vitality of the manner, and the translation of abstract arguments into concrete shapes of witchery and beauty. It contains scarcely a sentence that is not beautiful—not with the cold beauty of art, but with the radiance and warmth of feeling. Its dominant note is rapture, like the joy of one who has found an enchanted realm, or who has convinced himself that old stories deemed too beautiful to be true are true indeed. Yet it is exempt from extravagance, the splendour of the language is chastened by taste, and the gladness and significance of the author's announcements would justify an even more ardent enthusiasm. They may be briefly summed up as the statements that Nature is not mechanical but vital; that the Universe is not dead but alive, that God is not remote but omnipresent. There was of course no novelty in these assertions, nor can Emerson bring them by a hair's-breadth nearer demonstration than they have always been. He simply restates them in a manner entirely his own, and with a charm not perhaps surpassing that with which others had previously invested them, but peculiar and dissimilar. Everything really Emersonian in Emerson's teaching may be said to spring out of this little book. So copious, however, were the corollaries deducible from principles apparently so simple, that the flowers veiled the tree, and precious as the tract is, as the first and purest draught of the new wine, it is not the most practically efficient of his

works, and might have missed its aim if it had not been reinforced by a number of auxiliary compositions, some produced under circumstances which could not fail to provoke wide discussion and consequent notoriety. The principles unfolded in "Nature" might probably have passed with civil acquiescence if Emerson had been content with the mere statement; but he insisted on carrying them logically out, and this could not be done without unsettling every school of thought at the time prevalent in America. The Divine omnipresence, for example, was admitted in words by all except materialists and anti-theists, but if, as Emerson maintained, this involved the conception of the Universe as a Divine incarnation, this in its turn involved an optimistic view of the universal scheme totally inconsistent with the Calvinism still dominant in American theology. If all existence was a Divine emanation, no part of it could be more sacred than another part—which at once abolished the mystic significance of religious ceremonies so dear to the Episcopalians, while the immediate contact of the universe with the Deity was no less incompatible with the miraculous interferences on which Unitarianism reposed its faith. Such were some of the most important negative results of Emerson's doctrines; in their positive aspect, by asserting the identity of natural and spiritual laws, they invested the former with the reverence hitherto accorded only to the latter, and restored to a mechanical and prosaic society the piety with which men in the infancy of history had contemplated the forces of Nature. Substantially, except for the absence of any definite relation to literary art, Emerson's mission was very similar to Wordsworth's, but by natural temperament and actual situation he wanted the thousand links which bound Wordsworth to the past, and eventually made the sometime innovator the patron of a return towards the Middle Ages. Emerson had no wish to regress, and, almost alone among thinkers who have reached an advanced age, betrays no symptom of reaction throughout the whole of his career. The reason may be that his scrupulous fairness and frank concessions to the conservative cast of thought had left



him nothing to retract or atone for. He seems to have started on his journey through life with his conservatism and liberalism ready made up, taking with him just as much of each as he wanted. This is especially manifest in the discourse "The Conservative" (1841), in which he deliberately weighs conservative against progressive tendencies, impersonates each in an imaginary interlocutor, and endeavours to display their respective justification and shortcomings. Nothing can be more rigidly equitable or more thoroughly sane than his estimate, and as the issues between conservatism and reform have broadened and deepened, time has only added to its value. It is a perfect manual for thoughtful citizens desirous of understanding the questions that underlie party issues, and is especially to be commended to young and generous minds, liable to misguidance in proportion to their generosity.

This celebrated discourse is one of a group including one still more celebrated—the address to the graduating class of Divinity College, Cambridge, published as "The Christian Teacher" (1838). This, says Mr Cabot, seems to have been struck off at a heat, which perhaps accounts for its nearer approach than any of Emerson's other addresses to the standard of what is usually recognised as eloquence. Eloquent in a sense Emerson usually was, but here is something which could transport a fit audience with enthusiasm. It also possessed the power of awakening the keenest antagonism; but censure has long since died away, and nothing that Emerson wrote has been more thoroughly adopted into the creed of those with whom external observances and material symbols find no place. Equally epoch-making in a different way was the oration on "Man Thinking," or "The American Scholar" (1837), entitled by Dr Holmes "our intellectual declaration of independence," and of which Mr Lowell says, "We were socially and intellectually moored to English thought till Emerson cut the cable and gave us a chance at the dangers and glories of blue water." In these three great discourses, and in a less measure in "The Transcendentalist" and "Man the Reformer" (both in 1841), America may boast of possessing works of the first class, which could have

been produced in no other country, and which—even though, in Emerson's own phrase, wider circles should come to be drawn around them—will remain permanent landmarks in intellectual history

These discourses may be regarded as Emerson's public proclamations of his opinions, but he is probably more generally known and more intimately beloved by the two unobtrusive volumes of *Essays* originally prefaced for England by Carlyle. Most of these indeed were originally delivered as lectures, but to small audiences, and with little challenge to public attention. It may be doubted whether they would have succeeded as lectures but for the personal magnetism of the speaker, but their very defects aid them with the reader, who, once fascinated by their beauty of phrase and depth of spiritual insight, imbibes their spirit all the more fully for his ceaseless effort to mend their deficient logic with his own. Like Love in Dante's sonnet, Emerson enters into and blends with the reader, and his influence will often be found most potent where it is least acknowledged. Each of the twenty may be regarded as a fuller working-out of some subject merely hinted at in "*Nature*"—statues, as it were, for niches left vacant in the original edifice. The most important and pregnant with thought are "*History*," where the same claim is preferred for history as for the material world, that it is not dead but alive; "*Self-reliance*," a most vigorous assertion of a truth which Emerson was apt to carry to extremes—the majesty of the individual soul, "*Compensation*," an exposition of the Universe as the incarnation of unerring truth and absolute justice, "*Love*," full of beauty and rapture, yet almost chilling to the young by its assertion of what is nevertheless true—that even love in its human semblance only subserves ulterior ends, "*Circles*," the demonstration that this circumstance is in no way peculiar to Love—that there can be nothing ultimate, final, or unrelated to ulterior purpose, nothing around which, in Emersonian phrase, you cannot draw a circle, "*The Over-Soul*," a prose hymn dedicated to an absolutely spiritual religion, "*The Poet*," a celebration of poetry as co-extensive with

imagination, and in the highest sense with Reason also, "Experience" and "Character," valuable essays, but evincing that the poetical impulse was becoming spent, and that Emerson's mind was more and more tending to questions of conduct. The least satisfactory of the essays is that on "Art," where he is only great on the negative side, Art's inevitable limitations. The æsthetical faculty which contemplates beauty under the restraints of Form was evidently weak in him.

"Representative Men," Emerson's next work of importance (delivered as lectures in 1845, published in 1850), shows that his parachute was descending, but he makes a highly successful compromise by taking up original ideas as reflected in the actions and thoughts of great typical men, one remove only from originality of exposition on his own part. The treatment is necessarily so partial as to exercise a distorting influence on his representation of the men themselves. Napoleon, for example, may have been from a certain point of view the hero of the middle class, as Emerson chooses to consider him, but he was much besides, which cannot even be hinted at in a short lecture. The representation of such a hero, nevertheless, whether the character precisely fitted Napoleon or not, is highly spirited and suggestive, and the same may be said of the other lectures. That on Shakespeare is the least satisfying, the consummate art which is half Shakespeare's greatness making little appeal to Emerson. He appears also at variance with himself when he speaks of Shakespeare's existence as "obscure and profane," such a healthy, homely, unambitious life being precisely what he elsewhere extols as a model. The first lecture of the series, "Uses of Great Men," would seem to have whispered the message more vociferously repeated by Walt Whitman.

Emerson was yet to write two books of worth, not illumed with "the light that never was on sea or land," but valuable complements of his more characteristic work, and important to mankind as an indisputable proof that a teacher need not be distrusted in ordinary things because he is a mystic and a poet. "The Conduct of Life" (1851), far inferior to his earlier writings in inspiration, is yet one

of the most popular and widely influential of his works, because condescending more nearly to the needs and intelligence of the average reader. It is not less truly Emersonian, less fully impregnated with his unique genius, but the themes discussed are less interesting, and the glory and beauty of the diction are much subdued. Without it we should have been in danger of regarding Emerson too exclusively as a transcendental seer, and ignoring the solid ground of good sense and practical sagacity from which the waving forests of his imagery drew their nutriment. It greatly promoted his fame and influence by coming into the hands of successive generations of readers who naturally inquired for his last book, found the author, with surprise, much nearer their own intellectual position than they had been led to expect, and gradually extended the endorsement which they could not avoid according to the book to the author himself. When the Reason and the Understanding have agreed to legitimate the pretensions of a speculative thinker, these may be considered stable. Emerson insensibly took rank with the other American institutions; it seemed natural to all that, without the retraction or modification of a syllable on his part, Harvard should in 1866 confer her highest honours upon him whose address to her Divinity School had aroused such fierce opposition in 1838. Emerson's views, being pure intuitions, rarely admitted of alteration in essence, though supplement or limitation might sometimes be found advisable. The Civil War, for instance, could not but convince him that in his zeal for the independence of the individual he had dangerously impaired the necessary authority of government. His attitude throughout this great contest was the ideal of self-sacrificing patriotism, in truth it might be said of him, as of so few men of genius, that you could not find a situation for him, public or private, whose obligations he was not certain to fulfil. He had previously given proof of his insight into another nation by his "English Traits," mainly founded upon the visit he had paid to England in 1847-8, a book to be read with equal pleasure and profit by the nation of which and by the nation for which it was written; while its

insight, sanity, and kindliness justify what has been said on occasion of another of Emerson's writings "The ideologist judges the man of action more shrewdly and justly than the man of action judges the ideologist" This was the secret of Napoleon's bitter animosity to "ideologists" - he felt instinctively that the man of ideas could see into him and through him, and recognise and declare his place in the scheme of the universe as an astronomer might a planet's He would have wished to be an incalculable, original, elemental force; and it vexed him to feel that he was something whose course could be mapped and whose constitution defined by a mere mortal like a Coleridge or a De Stael, who could treat him like the incarnate thought he was, and show him, as Emerson showed the banker, "that he was also a phantom walking and working amid phantoms, and that he need only ask a question or two beyond his daily questions to find his solid universe proving dim and impalpable before his sense"

The later writings of Emerson, though exhibiting few or no cases of mental decay, are in general repetitions, or at least confirmations, of what had once been announcements and discoveries This can scarcely be otherwise, when the mind's productions are derived from its own stuff and substance Emerson's contemporary, Longfellow, could renovate and indeed augment his poetical power by resort in his old age to Italy, but change of environment brings no reinforcement of energy to the speculative thinker Events, however, may come to his aid, and when Emerson was called before the people by a momentous incident like the death of President Lincoln, he rose fully to the height of the occasion His last verses, also, are among his best We have spoken of him as primarily and above all things a poet, but his claim to that great distinction is to be sought rather in the poetical spirit which informs all his really inspired writings than in the comparatively restricted region of rhyme and metre It might have been otherwise Many of his detached passages are the very best things in verse yet written in America, but though a maker, he is not a fashioner The

artistic instinct is deficient in him, he is seldom capable of combining his thoughts into a harmonious whole. No one's expression in verse is better when he aims at conveying a single thought with gnomic terseness, as in the mottoes to his essays, few are more obscure when he attempts continuous composition. Sometimes, as in the admirable stanzas on the Bunker Hill dedication, the subject has enforced the due clearness and compression of thought; sometimes, as in the glorious lines beginning, "Not from a vain or shallow thought," he is guided unerringly by a divine rapture, in one instance at least, "The Rhodora," where he is writing of beauty, the instinct of beauty has given his lines the symmetry as well as the sparkle of the diamond. Could he have always written like this, he would have been supreme among American poets in metre; as it is, comparison seems unfair both to him and to them.

What we have to learn from Emerson is chiefly the Divine unmanence in the world, with all its corollaries—no discovery of his, but re stated by him in the fashion most suitable to his age, and with a cogency and attractiveness rivalled by no contemporary. If we tried to sum up his message in a phrase, we might perhaps find this in Keats's famous "Beauty is truth, Truth beauty," only while Keats was evidently more concerned for Beauty than for Truth, Emerson held an impartial balance. These are with him the tests of each other, whatever is really true is also beautiful, whatever is really beautiful is also true. Hence his especial value to a world whose more refined spirits are continually setting up types of æsthetic beauty which must needs be delusive, as discordant with beauty contemplated under the aspect of morality, while the mass never think of bringing social and political arrangements to the no less infallible test of conformity to an ideally beautiful standard. Hence the seeming idealist is of all men the most practical, and Emerson's gospel of beauty should be especially precious to a country like his own, where circumstances must for so long tell in favour of the more material phases of civilisation. Even more important is that aspect of his teaching which deals with

the unalterableness of spiritual laws, the impossibility of evading Truth and Fact in the long run, or of wronging anyone without at the same time wronging oneself. Happy would it be for the United States if Emerson's essay on "Compensation" in particular could be impressed upon the conscience, where there is any, of every political leader, and interwoven with the very texture of the mind of everyone who has a vote to cast at the polls!

The special adaptation of Emerson's teaching to the needs of America is, nevertheless, far from the greatest obligation under which he has laid his countrymen. His greatest service is to have embodied a specially American type of thought and feeling. It is the test of real greatness in a nation to be individual, to produce something in the world of intellect peculiar to itself and indefeasibly its own. Such intellectual growths were indeed to be found in America before Emerson's time, but they were not of the highest class. Franklin was a great sage, but his wisdom was worldly wisdom. Emerson gives us, in his own phrase, morality on fire with emotion—the only morality which in the long run will really influence the heart of man. Man is, after all, too noble a being to be permanently actuated by enlightened selfishness, and when we compare Emerson with even so truly eminent a character as Franklin, we see, as he saw when he compared Carlyle with Johnson, how great a stride forward his country had taken in the meantime. But he could do for America what Carlyle could not do for Great Britain, for it was done already—he could and did create a type of wisdom especially national, as characteristic of the West as Buddha's of the East.

## II

### TALKING AT LARGE

BY JOHN GALSWORTHY

IT is of the main new factors which have come into the life of the civilised world that I would speak

The division deep and subtle between those who have fought and those who have not, concerns us in Europe far more than you in America, for in proportion to your population the number of your soldiers who actually fought has been small, compared with the number in any belligerent European country. And I think that so far as you are concerned the division will soon disappear, (for the iron had not time to enter into the souls of your soldiers) For us in Europe, however, this factor is very tremendous, and will take a long time to wear away. (In my country the, as it were, professional English dislike to the expression of feeling, which strikes every American so forcibly, covers very deep hearts and highly sensitive nerves) The average Briton is now not at all stolid underneath, I think he has changed a great deal in this last century, owing to the town life which seven-tenths of our population lead. Perhaps only of the Briton may one still invent the picture which appeared in *Punch* in the autumn of 1914—of the steward on a battleship asking the naval lieutenant "Will you take your bath before or after the engagement, sir?" and only among Britons overhear one stoker say to another in the heat of a sea-fight "Well, wot I say is—'E ought to 'ave married 'er" (For all that, the Briton feels deeply; and on those who have fought the experiences of the battlefield have had an effect which almost amounts to metamorphosis) There are now two breeds of British people—such as have been long in the danger zones, and such as



have not, shading, of course, into each other through the many who have just smelled powder and peril, and the very few whose imaginations are vibrant enough to have lived the two lives, while only living one *ward mental peace*

In a certain cool paper called "The Balance-sheet of the Soldier Workman" I tried to come at the effect of the war, but purposely pitched it in a low and sober key, and there is a much more poignant tale of change to tell of each individual human being

Take a man who, when the war broke out (or had been raging perhaps a year), was living the ordinary Briton's life, in factory, shop, and home. Suppose that he went through that deep, sharp struggle between the pull of home love and interests, and the pull of country (for I hope it will never be forgotten that five million Britons were volunteers), and came out committed to his country. That then he had to submit to being rattled at great speed into the soldier-shape which we Britons and you Americans have been brought up to regard as but the half of a free man, that then he was plunged into such a hideous hell of horrible danger and discomfort as this planet has never seen, came out of it time and again, went back into it time and again, and finally emerged, shattered or unscathed, with a spirit at once uplifted and enlarged, yet bruised and ungeared for the old life of peace. Imagine such a man set back among those who have not been driven and grilled and crucified. What would he feel, and how bear himself? On the surface he would no doubt disguise the fact that he felt different from his neighbours—he would conform, but something within him would ever be stirring, a sort of superiority, an impatient sense that he had been through it and they had not, the feeling, too, that he had seen the bottom of things, that nothing he could ever experience again would give him the sensations he had had out there, that he had lived, and there could be nothing more to it. I don't think that we others quite realise what it must mean to those men, most of them under thirty, to have been stretched to the uttermost, to have no illusions left, and yet have, perhaps, forty years still to live. There is something gained in them, but there's something gone from

## TALKING AT LARGE

them, 'The old sanctions, the old values won't hold; are there any sanctions and values which can be made to hold?' A kind of unreality must needs cling about their lives henceforth. This is a finespun way of putting it, but I think, at bottom, true

The old professional soldier lived for his soldiering. At the end of a war (however terrible) there was left to him a vista of more wars, more of what had become to him the ultimate reality—his business in life. For these temporary soldiers of what has been not so much a war as a prolonged piece of very horrible carnage, there succeeds something so mild in sensation that it simply will not fill the void. (When the dish of life has lost its savour, by reason of violent and uttermost experience, wherewith shall it be salted?)

The American Civil War was very long and very dreadful, but it was a human and humane business compared to what Europe has just come through. There is no analogy in history for the present moment. An old soldier of that Civil War, after hearing these words, wrote me an account of his after-career which shows that in exceptional cases a life so stirring, full, and even dangerous may be lived that no void is felt. (But one swallow does not make a summer, nor will a few hundreds or even thousands of such lives leaven to any extent the vast lump of human material used in this war.) The spiritual point is this: In front of a man in ordinary civilised existence there hovers ever that moment in the future when he expects to prove himself more of a man than he has yet proved himself. For these soldiers of the Great Carnage the moment of probation is already in the past. They *have* proved themselves as they will never have the chance to do again, and secretly they know it. (One talks of their powers of heroism and sacrifice being wanted just as much in time of Peace; but that cannot really be so, because Peace times do not demand men's lives—which is the ultimate test—with every minute that passes. No, the great moment of their existence lies behind them, young though so many of them are.) This makes them at once greater than us, yet in a way smaller, because they have lost the power and hope of expansion.

They have lived their masterpiece already Human nature is elastic, and hope springs eternal, but a *climax* of experience and sensation cannot be repeated, I think these have reached and passed the uttermost climax, and in Europe they number millions <sup>unconscious</sup>

This is a veritable portent, and I am glad that in America you will not have it to any great extent

Now how does this affect the future? Roughly speaking it must, I think, have a diminishing effect on what I may call loosely—Creative ability People have often said to me "We shall have great writings and paintings from these young men when they come back" We shall certainly have poignant expression of their experiences and sufferings, and the best books and paintings of the war itself are probably yet to come But, taking the long view, I do not believe we shall have from them, in the end, as much creative art and literature as we should have had if they had not been through the war (Illusion about life, and interest in ordinary daily experience and emotion, which, after all, are to be the stuff of their future as of ours, has in a way been blunted or destroyed for them) And in the other provinces of life, in industry, in trade, in affairs, how can we expect from men who have seen the utter uselessness of money or comfort or power in the last resort, the same naïve faith in these things, or the same driving energy towards the attaining of them that we others exhibit?

It may be cheering to assume that those who have been almost superhuman these last four years in one environment will continue to be almost superhuman under conditions the very opposite But, alack! it is not logical

On the other hand, I think that those who have had this great and racking experience will be left, for the most part, with a real passion for Justice, and that this will have a profoundly modifying effect on social conditions I think, too, that many of them will have a sort of passion for humaneness, which will, if you will suffer me to say so, come, in very handy, for I have observed that the rest of us, through reading about horrors, have lost the edge of our gentleness, and have got into the habit of thinking that it

is the business of women and children to starve, if they happen to be German, of creatures to be underfed and overworked if they happen to be horses, of families to be broken up if they happen to be aliens; and that a general carelessness as to what suffering is necessary and what is not, has set in. And, queer as it may seem, I look to those who have been in the thuck of the worst suffering the world has ever seen to set us in the right path again, and to correct the vitriolic sentiments engendered by the arm-chair and the inkpot, in times such as we have been and are still passing through. A cloistered life in times like these engenders bile, in fact, I think it always does. For sheer ferocity there is no place, you will have noticed, like a club full of old gentlemen. I expect the men who have come home from killing each other to show us the way back to brotherliness! And not before it's wanted. Here is a little true story of war-time, when all men were supposed to be brothers if they belonged to the same nation. In the fifth year of the war two men sat alone in a railway carriage. One, pale, young, and rather worn, had an unlighted cigarette in his mouth. The other, elderly, prosperous, and of a ruddy countenance, was smoking a large cigar.

The young man, who looked as if his days were strenuous, took his unlighted cigarette from his mouth, gazed at it, searched his pockets, and looked at the elderly man. His nose twitched, vibrated by the scent of the cigar, and he said suddenly

"Could you give me a light, sir?"

The elderly man regarded him for a moment, drooped his eyelids, and murmured

"I've no matches."

The young man sighed, mumbling the cigarette in his watering lips, then said very suddenly.

"Perhaps you'll kindly give me a light from your cigar, sir."

The elderly man moved throughout his body as if something very sacred had been touched within him.

"I'd rather not," he said, "if you don't mind."

A quarter of an hour passed, while the young man's cigarette grew moister, and the elder man's cigar shorter.

Then the latter stirred, took it from under his grey moustache, looked critically at it, held it out a little way towards the other with the side which was least burned down foremost, and said :—

" Unless you'd like to take it from the edge "

On the other hand one has often travelled in these last years with extreme embarrassment because our soldiers were so extraordinarily anxious that one should smoke their cigarettes, eat their apples, and their sauages. The marvels of comradeship they have performed would fill the libraries of the world

The second main new factor in the world's life is the disappearance of the old autocracies

In 1910, walking in Hyde Park with a writer friend, I remember saying " It's the hereditary autocracies in Germany, Austria, and Russia which make the danger of war " He did not agree—but no two writers agree with each other at any given moment " If only autocracies go down in the wreckage of this war ! " was almost the first thought I put down in writing when the war broke out. Well, they are gone ! ( They were an anachronism, and without them and the bureaucracies and secrecy which buttressed them we should not, I think, have had this world catastrophe. But let us not too glibly assume that the forms of government which take their place can steer the battered ships of the nations in the very troubled waters of to-day, or that they will be truly democratic. Even highly democratic statesmen have been known to resort to the way of the headmaster at my old school, who put a motion to the masters' meeting and asked for a show of hands in its favour. Not one hand was held up. " Then," he said, " I shall adopt it with the greater regret " ( Nevertheless, the essential new factor is, that, whereas in 1914 civilisation was on two planes, it is now, theoretically, at least, on the one democratic plane or level ) ( That is a great easing of the world-situation, and removes a chief cause of international misunderstanding ) The rest depends on what we can now make of democracy. Surely no word can so easily be taken in vain, to have got rid of the hereditary principle in government is by no means to have made

democracy a real thing (Democracy is neither government by rabble, nor government by caucus) Its measure as a beneficent principle is the measure of the intelligence, honesty, public spirit, and independence of the average voter The voter who goes to the poll blind of an eye and with a cast in the other, so that he sees no issue clear, and every issue only in so far as it affects him personally, is not precisely the sort of ultimate administrative power we want Intelligent, honest, public-spirited, and independent voters guarantee an honest and intelligent governing body The best men the best government, is a truism which cannot be refuted Democracy to be real and effective must succeed in throwing up into the positions of administrative power the most trustworthy of its able citizens In other words, it must incorporate and make use of the principle of aristocracy, government by the best—*best in spirit*, not best-born (Rightly seen, there is no tug between democracy and aristocracy, aristocracy should be the means and machinery by which democracy works itself out) What then can be done to increase in the average voter intelligence and honesty, public spirit and independence? Nothing save by education The Arts, the Schools, the Press It is impossible to overestimate the need for vigour, breadth, restraint, good taste, enlightenment, and honesty in these three agencies The artist, the teacher (and among teachers one includes, of course, religious teachers in so far as they concern themselves with the affairs of this world), and the journalist have the future in their hands As they are fine the future will be fine, as they are mean the future will be mean The burden is very specially on the shoulders of Public Men, and that most powerful agency the Press, which reports them Do we realise the extent to which the modern world relies for its opinions on public utterances and the Press? Do we realise how completely we are all in the power of report? Any little lie or exaggerated sentiment uttered by one with a bee in his bonnet, with a principle, or an end to serve, can, if cleverly expressed and distributed, distort the views of thousands, sometimes of millions Any wilful suppression of truth for Party or personal ends can so falsify our vision of things

as to plunge us into endless cruelties and follies. Honesty of thought and speech and written word is a jewel, and they who curb prejudice and seek honourably to know and speak the truth are the only true builders of a better life. But what a dull world if we can't chatter and write irresponsibly, can't slop over with hatred, or pursue our own ends without scruple! To be tied to the apron-strings of truth, or coiffed with the nightcap of silence, who in this age of cheap ink and oratory will submit to such a fate? And yet, if we do not want another seven million violent deaths, another eight million maimed and halt and blind, and if we do not want anarchy, our tongues must be sober, and we must tell the truth. (Report, I would almost say, now rules the world and holds the fate of man on the sayings of its many tongues.) (If the good sense of mankind cannot somehow restrain utterance and cleanse report, Democracy, so highly vaunted, will not save us, and all the glib words of promise spoken might as well have lain unuttered in the throats of orators. We are always in peril under Democracy, of taking the line of least resistance and immediate material profit.) The gentleman, for instance, whoever he was, who first discovered that he could sell his papers better by undercutting the standard of his rivals, and appealing to the lower tastes of the Public under the flag of that convenient expression "what the Public wants," made a most evil discovery. The Press is for the most part in the hands of men who know what is good and right. It can be a great agency for levelling up. But whether on the whole it is so or not, one continually hears doubted. There ought to be no room for doubt in any of our minds that the Press is on the side of the angels. It can do as much as any other single agency to raise the level of honesty, intelligence, public spirit, and taste in the average voter, in other words, to build Democracy on a sure foundation. This is a truly tremendous trust, for the safety of civilisation and the happiness of mankind hang thereby. The saying about little children and the kingdom of heaven was meant for the ears of all those who have it in their power to influence simple folk. To be a good and honest editor, a good and honest journalist is in these days to be a veritable benefactor of mankind.

Now take the function of the artist, of the man who, in stone, or music, marble, bronze, paint, or words, can express himself, and his vision of life, truly and beautifully. Can we set limit to his value? The answer is in the affirmative. We set such limitation to his value that he has been known to die of it. And I would only venture to say here that if we don't increase the store we set by him, we shall, in this reach-me-down age of machines and wholesale standardisations, emulate the Goths who did their best to destroy the art of Rome, and all these centuries later, by way of atonement, have filled the Thiergarten at Berlin and the City of London with peculiar brands of statuary, and are always writing their names on the Sphynx.

I suppose the hardest lesson we all have to learn in life is that we can't have things both ways. If we want to have beauty, that which appeals not merely to the stomach and the epidermis (which is the function of the greater part of industrialism), but to what lies deeper within the human organism, the heart and the brain, we must have conditions which permit and even foster the production of beauty. The artist, unfortunately, no less than the rest of mankind, must eat to live. Now, if we insist that we will pay the artist only for what fascinates the popular uneducated instincts, he will either produce beauty, remain unpaid and starve, or he will give us shoddy, and fare sumptuously every day. My experience tells me this. An artist who is by accident of independent means can, if he has talent, give the Public what he, the artist, wants, and sooner or later the public will take whatever he gives it, at his own valuation. But very few artists *who have no independent means* have enough character to hold out until they can sit on the Public's head and pull the Public's beard, to use the old Sikh saying. How many times have I not heard over here—and it's very much the same over there—that a man must produce this or that kind of work or else of course he can't live. My advice—at all events to young artists and writers—is “Sooner than do that and have someone sitting on *your* head and pulling your beard all the time, go out of business—there are other means of making a living, besides faked or degraded art. Become a dentist and revenge yourself on the Public's teeth—even



editors and picture dealers go to the dentist!" The artist has got to make a stand against being exploited, and he has got, also, to live the kind of life which will give him a chance to see clearly, to feel truly, and to express beautifully. He, too, is a trustee for the future of mankind. Money has one inestimable value—it guarantees independence, the power of going your own way and giving out the best that's in you. But, generally speaking, we don't stop there in our desire for money, and I would say that any artist who doesn't stop there is not "playing the game," neither towards himself nor towards mankind, he is not standing up for the faith that is in him, and the future of civilisation.

And now what of the teacher? One of the discouraging truths of life is the fact that a man cannot raise himself from the ground by the hair of his own head. And if one took Democracy logically, one would have to give up the idea of improvement. But things are not always what they seem, as somebody once said, and fortunately, government "of the people by the people for the people" does not in practice prevent the people from using those saving graces—Common-sense and Selection. In fact, only by the use of those graces will democracy work at all. When twelve men get together to serve on a jury, their common-sense makes them select the least stupid among them to be their foreman. Each of them, of course, feels that he is that least stupid man, but since a man cannot vote for himself, he votes for the least dense among his neighbours, and the foreman comes to life. The same principle applied thoroughly enough throughout the social system produces government by the best. And it is more vital to apply it *thoroughly* in matters of education than in other branches of human activity. But when we have secured our best heads of education, we must trust them and give them real power, for they are the hope—well-nigh the only hope—of our future. They alone, by the selection and instruction of their subordinates and the curricula which they lay down, can do anything substantial in the way of raising the standard of general taste, conduct, and learning. They alone can give the starting push towards

greater dignity and simplicity; promote the love of proportion, and the feeling for beauty. They alone can gradually instil into the body politic the understanding that education is not a means towards wealth as such, or learning as such, but towards the broader ends of health and happiness. The first necessity for improvement in modern life is that our teachers should have the wide view, and be provided with the means and the curricula which make it possible to apply this enlightenment to their pupils. Can we take too much trouble to secure the best men as heads of education—that most responsible of all positions in the modern State? The child is father to the man. We think too much of politics and too little of education. We treat it almost as cavalierly as the undergraduate treated the Master of Balliol. "Yes," he said, showing his people round the quadrangle, "that's the Master's window," then, picking up a pebble, he threw it against the window-pane. "And that," he said, as a face appeared, "is the Master!" Democracy has come, and on education Democracy hangs, the thread as yet is slender.

It is a far cry to the third new factor. Exploitation of the air. We were warned by Sir Hiram Maxim about 1910 that a year or so of war would do more for the conquest of the air than many years of peace. It has. We hear of a man flying 260 miles in ninety minutes, of the Atlantic being flown in twenty-four hours, of airships which will have a lifting capacity of 300 tons; of air mail-routes all over the world. The time will perhaps come when we shall live in the air, and come down to earth on Sundays.

I confess that, mechanically marvellous as all this is, it interests me chiefly as a prime instance of the way human beings prefer the shadow of existence to its substance. Granted that we speed up everything, that we annihilate space, that we increase the powers of trade, leave no point of the earth unsurveyed, and are able to perform air-stunts which people will pay five dollars apiece to see—how shall we have furthered human health, happiness, and virtue, speaking in the big sense of these words? It is an advantage, of course, to be able to carry food to a starving community in some desert, to rescue shipwrecked mariners, to have

a letter from one's wife four days sooner than one could otherwise; and generally to save time in the swapping of our commodities and the journeys we make. But how does all this help human beings to inner contentment of spirit and health of body? Did the arrival of motor-cars, bicycles, telephones, trains, and steamships do much for them in that line? Anything which serves to stretch human capabilities to the utmost, would help human happiness, if each new mechanical activity, each new human toy, as it were, did not so run away with our sense of proportion as to debauch our energies. A man, for instance, takes to motoring, who used to ride or walk, it becomes a passion with him, so that he now never rides or walks—and his calves become flabby and his liver enlarged. A man puts a telephone into his house to save time and trouble, and is straightway a slave to the tinkle of its bell. The few human activities in themselves and of themselves pure good are just eating, drinking, sleeping, and the affections—in moderation, the inhaling of pure air, exercise in most of its forms, and interesting creative work—in moderation, the study and contemplation of the arts and Nature—in moderation, thinking of others and not thinking of yourself—in moderation, doing kind acts and thinking kind thoughts. All the rest seems to be what the prophet had in mind when he said, “Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!” Ah! but the one great activity—adventure and the craving for sensation! It is that for which the human being really lives, and all his restless activity is caused by the desire for it. True, yet adventure and sensation without rhyme or reason lead to disharmony and disproportion. We may take civilisation to the South Sea Islands, but it would be better to leave the islanders naked and healthy than to improve them with trousers and civilisation off the face of the earth. We may invent new cocktails, but it would be better to stay dry. In mechanical matters I am reactionary, for I cannot believe in inventions and machinery unless they can be so controlled as to minister definitely to health and happiness—and how difficult that is! In my own country the townsman has become physically inferior to the countryman (speaking in the large), and I infer from

this that we British—at all events—are not so in command of ourselves and our wonderful inventions and machines that we are putting them to uses which are really beneficent. If we had proper command of ourselves, no doubt we could do this, but we haven't; and if you look about you in America, the same doubt may possibly attack you.

But there is another side to the exploitation of the air which does not as yet affect you in America as it does us in Europe—the destructive side. Britain, for instance, is no longer an island. In five or ten years it will, I think, be impossible to guarantee the safety of Britain, and Britain's commerce, by sea-power, and those who continue to pin faith to that formula will find themselves nearly as much back-numbered as people who continued to prefer wooden ships to iron, when the iron age came in. Armaments on land and sea will be limited, not, I think, so much by a League of Nations, if it comes, as by the common-sense of people who begin to observe that with the development of the powers of destruction and of transport from the air, land and sea armaments are becoming of little use. We may all disarm completely, and yet—so long as there are flying-machines and high explosives—remain almost as formidably destructive as ever. So difficult to control, so infinite in its possibilities for evil, and so limited in its possibilities for good do I consider this exploitation of the air that, personally, I would rejoice to see the nations in solemn conclave agree this very minute to ban the use of the air altogether, whether for trade, travel, or war, destroy every flying-machine and every airship, and forbid their construction. That, of course, is a consummation which will remain devoutly to be wished. Every day one reads in one's paper that some country or other is to take the lead in the air. What a wild-geese chase we are in for! I verily believe mankind will come one day in their underground dwellings to the annual practice of burning in effigy the Guy (whoever he was) who first rose off the earth. After I had talked in this strain once before, a young airman came up to me and said, "Have you been up?" I shook my head. "You wait!" he said. When I do go up I shall take great pains not to go up with that one

We now come to the fourth great new factor—Bolshevism, and the social unrest. But I am shy of saying anything about it, for my knowledge and experience are insufficient. I will only offer one observation. Whatever philosophic cloak may be thrown over the shoulders of Bolshevism, it is obviously—like every revolutionary movement of the past—an aggregation of individual discontents, the sum of millions of human moods of dissatisfaction with the existing state of things, and whatever philosophic cloak we drape on the body of liberalism, if by that name we may designate our present social and political system—that system has clearly not yet justified its claim to the word evolutionary, so long as the disproportion between the very rich and the very poor continues (as hitherto it has) to grow. No system can properly be called evolutionary which provokes against it the rising of so formidable a revolutionary wave of discontent. One hears that co-operation is now regarded as *vieux-jeu*. If that be so, it is because co-operation, in its true sense of spontaneous friendliness between man and man, has never been tried. Perhaps human nature in the large can never rise to that ideal. But if it cannot, if industrialism cannot achieve a change of heart, so that in effect employers would rather their profits (beyond a quite moderate scale) were used for the amelioration of the lot of those they employ, it looks to me uncommonly like being the end of the present order of things, after an era of class-struggle which will shake civilisation to its foundations. Being myself an evolutionist, who fundamentally distrusts violence, and admires the old Greek saying “God is the helping of man by man,” I yet hope it will not come to that, I yet believe we may succeed in striking the balance, without civil wars. But I feel that (speaking of Europe) it is touch and go. In America, in Canada, in Australia, the conditions are different, the powers of expansion still large, the individual hopefulness much greater. There is little analogy with the state of things in Europe, but whatever happens in Europe must have its infectious influence in America. The wise man takes Time by the forelock—and goes in front of events.

Let me turn away to the fifth great new factor the impetus towards a League of Nations

This, to my thinking, so wholly advisable, would inspire more hopefulness if the condition of Europe was not so terribly confused, and if the most salient characteristics of human nature were not elasticity, bluntness of imagination, and shortness of memory. Those of us who, while affirming the principle of the League, are afraid of committing ourselves to what obviously cannot at the start be a perfect piece of machinery, seem inclined to forget that if the assembled Statesmen fail to *place in running order, now*, some definite machinery for the consideration of international disputes, the chance will certainly slip. We cannot reckon on more than a very short time during which the horror of war will rule our thoughts and actions. And during that short time it is essential that the League should have had some tangible success in preventing war. Mankind puts its faith in facts, not theories, in proven, and not in problematic, success. One can imagine with what profound suspicion and contempt the armed individualists of the Neolithic Age regarded the first organised tribunal, with what surprise they found that it actually worked so well that they felt justified in dropping their habit of taking the lives and property of their neighbours first and thinking over it afterwards. Not till the Tribunal of the League of Nations has had successes of conciliation, visible to all, will the armed individualist nations of to-day begin to rub their cynical and suspicious eyes, and to sprinkle their armour with moth-powder. No one who, like myself, has recently experienced the sensation of landing in America after having lived in Europe throughout the war, can fail to realise the reluctance of Americans to commit themselves, and the difficulty Americans have in realising the need for doing so. But may I remind Americans that during the first years of the war there was practically the same general American reluctance to interfere in an old-world struggle, and that in the end America found that it was not an old-world but a world-struggle? It is entirely reasonable to dislike snatching chestnuts out of the fire for other people, and to shun departure from the

## JOHN GALSWORTHY

letter of cherished tradition, but things do not stand still in this world, storm centres shift, and live doctrine often becomes dead dogma

*as the nation*  
The League of Nations is but an incorporation of the co-operative principle in world affairs—We have seen to what the lack of that principle leads both in international and national life Americans seem almost unanimously in favour of a League of Nations, so long as it is sufficiently airy—perhaps one might say “hot-airy”, but when it comes to earth, many of them fear the risk I would only say that no great change ever comes about in the lives of men unless they take risks, no progress can be made As to the other objection taken to the League, not only by Americans—that it won't work—well, we shall never know the rights of that unless we try it The two chief factors in avoiding war are Publicity and Delay If there is some better plan for bringing these two factors into play than the machinery of a League of Nations, I have yet to learn of it The League, which, I think, will come in spite of all our hesitations, may very likely make claims larger than its real powers, and there is, of course, danger in that, but there is also wisdom and advantage, for the success of the League must depend enormously on how far it succeeds in riveting the imaginations of mankind in its first years The League should therefore make bold claims After all, there is solidity and truth in this notion of a Society of Nations The world is really growing towards it beneath all surface rivalries We must admit it to be in the line of natural development, unless we turn our back on all analogy Don't then let us be ashamed of it, as if it were a piece of unpractical idealism. It is much more truly real than the state of things which has led to the misery of these last four years The soldiers who have fought and suffered and known the horrors of war, desire it The objections come from those who have but watched them fight and suffer Like every other change in the life of mankind, and like every new development in industry or art, the League needs faith Let us have faith and give it a good “send-off” *and all that*

I have left what I deem the greatest new factor till the

last—Anglo-American unity. Greater it is even than the impetus towards a League of Nations, because without it the League of Nations has surely not the chance of a lost dog. *Shakespeare C. . . . .*

I have been reading a Life of George Washington, which has filled me with admiration of your stand against our Junkers of those days. And I am familiar with the way we outraged the sentiment of both the North and the South, in the days of your Civil War. No wonder your history books were not precisely Anglophile, and that Americans grew up in a traditional dislike of Great Britain! I am realist enough to know that the past will not vanish like a ghost—just because we have fought side by side in this war, and realist enough to recognise the other elements which make for patches of hearty dislike between our peoples. But, surveying the whole field, I believe there are links and influences too strong for the disruptive forces, and I am sure that the first duty of English and American citizens to-day is to be fair and open to understanding about each other. If anyone will take down the map of the world and study it, he will see at once how that world is ballasted by the English-speaking countries, how, so long as they remain friends, holding as they do the trade routes and the main material resources of the world under their control, the world must needs sail on an even keel. And if he will turn to the less visible chart of the world's mental qualities, he will find a certain reassuring identity of ideals between the various English-speaking races, which form a sort of guarantee of stable unity. Thirdly, in community of language we have a factor promoting unity of ethics, potent as blood itself, for community of language is ever unconsciously producing unity of traditions and ideas. Americans and Britons, we are both, of course, very competitive peoples, and I suppose consider our respective nations the chosen people of the earth. That is a weakness which, though natural, is extremely silly, and merely proves that we have not yet outgrown provincialism. But competition is possible without reckless rivalry. There was once a boot-maker who put over his shop. "Mens conscia recta" ("A mind conscious of right"). He did quite well, till a



rival bootmaker came along, established himself opposite, and put over *his* shop the words "Men's, Women's, and Children's conscia recti," and did even better. The way nations try to cut each other's commercial throats is what makes the stars twinkle—that smile on the face of the heavens. It has the even more ruinous effect of making bad blood in the veins of the nations. Let us try playing the game of commerce like sportsmen, and respect each other's qualities and efforts. Sportsmanship has been rather ridiculed of late, yet I dare make the assertion that she will yet hold the field, both in your country and in mine, and if in our countries—then in the world.

It is ignorance of each other, not knowledge, which has always made us push each other off—the habit, you know, is almost endemic in strangers, so that they do it even in their sleep. There were once two travellers, a very large man and a very little man, strangers to each other, whom fate condemned to share a bed at an inn. In his sleep the big man stirred, and pushed the little man out on to the floor. The little man got up in silence, climbed carefully over the big man, who was still asleep, got his back against the wall and his feet firmly planted against the small of the big man's back, gave a tremendous revengeful push and—pushed the bed away from the wall and fell down in between. Such is the unevenness of fate, and the result of taking things too seriously. America and England must not push each other out, even in their sleep, nor resent the unconscious shoves they give each other, too violently. Since we have been comrades in this war we have taken to speaking well of each other, even in public print. To cease doing that now will show that we spoke nicely of each other only because we were afraid of the consequences if we did not. Well, we both have a sense of humour.

But not only self-preservation and the fear of ridicule guard our friendship. We have, I hope, also the feeling that we stand, by geographical and political accident, trustees for the health and happiness of all mankind. The magnitude of this trust cannot be exaggerated, and I would wish that every American and British boy and girl could be brought up to reverence it—not to believe that

they are there to whip creation We are here to *serve* creation, that creation may be ever better all over the earth, and life more humane, more just, more free The habit of being charitable to each other will grow if we give it a little chance If we English-speaking peoples, bear with each other's foibles, help each other over the stiles we come on, and keep the peace of the world, there is still hope that some day that world may come to be God's own

Let us be just and tolerant, let us stand fast and stand together—for light and liberty, for humanity and Peace !

### III

## REALITY

BY HILAIRE BELLOC

A COUPLE of generations ago there was a sort of man going mournfully about who complained of the spread of education. He had an ill-ease in his mind. He feared that book learning would bring us no good, and he was called a fool for his pains. Not undeservedly—for his thoughts were muddled, and if his heart was good it was far better than his head. He argued badly or he merely affirmed, but he had strong allies (Ruskin was one of them), and, like every man who is sincere, there was something in what he said, like every type which is numerous, there was a human feeling behind him and he was very numerous.

Now that he is pretty well extinct we are beginning to understand what he meant and what there was to be said for him. The greatest of the French Revolutionists was right—"After bread, the most crying need of the populace is knowledge." But what knowledge?

The truth is that secondary impressions, impressions gathered from books and from maps, are valuable as adjuncts to primary impressions (that is, impressions gathered through the channel of our senses), or, what is always almost as good and sometimes better, the interpreting voice of the living man. For you must allow me the paradox that in some mysterious way the voice and gesture of a living witness always convey something of the real impression he has had, and sometimes convey more than we should have received ourselves from our own sight and hearing of the thing related.

Well, I say, these secondary impressions are valuable as adjuncts to primary impressions. But when they stand

absolute and have hardly any reference to primary impressions, then they may deceive. When they stand not only absolute but clothed with authority, and when they pretend to convince us even against our own experience, they are positively undoing the work which education was meant to do. When we receive them merely as an enlargement of what we know, and make of the unseen things of which we read things in the image of the seen, then they quite distort our appreciation of the world.

Consider so simple a thing as a river. A child learns its map and knows, or thinks it knows, that such and such rivers characterise such and such nations and their territories. Paris stands upon the river Seine, Rome upon the river Tiber, New Orleans on the Mississippi, Toledo upon the river Tagus, and so forth. That child will know one river, the river near his home. And he will think of all those other rivers in its image. He will think of the Tagus and the Tiber and the Seine and the Mississippi—and they will all be the river near his home. Then let him travel, and what will he come across? The Seine, if he is from these islands, may not disappoint him or astonish him with a sense of novelty and of ignorance. It will indeed look grander and more majestic, seen from the enormous forest heights above its lower course, than what, perhaps, he had thought possible in a river, but still it will be a river of water out of which a man can drink, with clear-cut banks and with bridges over it, and with boats that ply up and down. But let him see the Tagus at Toledo, and what he finds is brown rolling mud, pouring solid after the rains, or sluggish and hardly a river after long drought. Let him go down the Tiber, down the Valley of the Tiber, on foot, and he will retain until the last miles an impression of nothing but a turbid mountain torrent, mixed with the friable soil in its bed. Let him approach the Mississippi in the most part of its long course, and the novelty will be more striking still. It will not seem to him a river at all (if he be from Northern Europe); it will seem a chance flood. He will come to it through marshes and through swamps, crossing a deserted backwater, finding firm land beyond, then coming to further shallow patches of wet, out

of which the tree-stumps stand, and beyond which again mud-heaps and banks and groups of reeds leave undetermined, for one hundred yards after another, the limits of the vast stream. At last, if he has a boat with him, he may make some place where he has a clear view right across to low trees, tiny from their distance, similarly half swamped upon a further shore, and behind them a low escarpment of bare earth. That is the Mississippi nine times out of ten, and to an Englishman who had expected to find from his early reading or his maps a larger Thames it seems for all the world like a stretch of East Anglian flood, save that it is so much more desolate.

The maps are coloured to express the claims of Governments. What do they tell you of the social truth? Go on foot or bicycling through the more populated upland belt of Algiers and discover the curious mixture of security and war which no map can tell you of and which none of the geographies make you understand. The excellent roads, trodden by men that cannot make a road, the walls as ready loopholed for fighting, the Christian church and the mosque in one town, the necessity for and the hatred of the European, the indescribable difference of the sun, which here, even in winter, has something malignant about it, and strikes as well as warms, the mountains odd, unlike our mountains, the forests, which stand as it were by hardihood, and seem at war against the influence of dryness and the desert winds, with their trees far apart, and between them no grass, but bare earth alone.

So it is with the reality of arms and with the reality of the sea. Too much reading of battles has ever unfitted men for war, too much talk of the sea is a poison in these great town populations of ours which know nothing of the sea. Who that knows anything of the sea will claim certitude in connection with it? And yet there is a school which has by this time turned its mechanical system almost into a commonplace upon our lips, and talks of that most perilous thing, the fortunes of a fleet, as though it were a merely numerical and calculable thing! The greatest of Armadas may set out and not return.

There is one experience of travel and of the physical

realities of the world which has been so widely repeated, and which men have so constantly verified, that I could mention it as a last example of my thesis without fear of misunderstanding I mean the quality of a great mountain.

To one that has never seen a mountain it may seem a full and a fine piece of knowledge to be acquainted with its height in feet exactly, its situation, nay, many would think themselves learned if they know no more than its conventional name But the thing itself! The curious sense of its isolation from the common world, of its being the habitation of awe, perhaps the brooding-place of a god!

I had seen many mountains, I had travelled in many places, and I had read many particular details in the books—and so well noted them upon the maps that I could have re-drawn the maps—concerning the Cerdagne None the less the sight of that wall of the Cerdagne, when first it struck me, coming down the pass from Tourcarol, was as novel as though all my life had been spent upon empty plains By the map it was 9000 feet It might have been 90,000! The wonderment as to what lay beyond, the sense that it was a limit to known things, its savage intangibility, its sheer silence! Nothing but the eye seeing could give one all those things

The old complain that the young will not take advice But the wisest will tell them that, save blindly and upon authority, the young cannot take it For most of human and social experience is words to the young, and the reality can come only with years The wise complain of the jingo in every country, and properly, for he upsets the plans of statesmen, miscalculates the value of national forces, and may, if he is powerful enough, destroy the true spirit of armies But the wise would be wiser still if, while they blamed the extravagance of this sort of man, they would recognise that it came from that half-knowledge of mere names and lists which excludes reality It is maps and newspapers that turn an honest fool into a jingo

It is so again with distance, and it is so with time Men will not grasp distance unless they have traversed it, or unless it be represented to them vividly by the comparison

of great landscapes Men will not grasp historical time unless the historian shall be at the pains to give them what historians so rarely give, the measure of a period in terms of a human life It is from secondary impressions divorced from reality that a contempt for the past arises, and that the fatal illusion of some gradual process of betterment of "progress" vulgarises the minds of men and wastes their effort It is from secondary impressions divorced from reality that a society imagines itself diseased when it is healthy, or healthy when it is diseased And it is from secondary impressions divorced from reality that springs the amazing power of the little second-rate public man in those modern machines that think themselves democracies This last is a power which, luckily, cannot be greatly abused, for the men upon whom it is thrust are not capable even of abuse upon a great scale It is none the less marvellous in its falsehood

Now you will say at the end of this, Since you blame so much the power for distortion and for ill residing in our great towns, in our system of primary education and in our papers and in our books, what remedy can you propose? Why, none, either immediate or mechanical The best and the greatest remedy is a true philosophy, which shall lead men always to ask themselves what they really know and in what order of certitude they know it, where authority actually resides and where it is usurped But, apart from the advent, or rather the recapture, of a true philosophy by a European society, two forces are at work which will always bring reality back, though less swiftly and less whole The first is the poet, and the second is Time

Sooner or later Time brings the empty phrase and the false conclusion up against what is, the empty imaginary looks reality in the face and the truth at once conquers In war a nation learns whether it is strong or no, and how it is strong and how weak, it learns it as well in defeat as in victory In the long processes of human lives, in the succession of generations, the real necessities and nature of a human society destroy any false formula upon which it was attempted to conduct it Time must always ultimately teach.

The poet, in some way it is difficult to understand (unless we admit that he is a seer), is also very powerful as the ally of such an influence. He brings out the inner part of things and presents them to men in such a way that they cannot refuse but must accept it. But how the mere choice and rhythm of words should produce so magical an effect no one has yet been able to comprehend, and least of all the poets themselves.



## IV

### ON A SOUTHERN HARBOUR

BY HILAIRE BELLOC

THE ship had sailed northward in an even manner and under a sky that was full of stars, when the dawn broke and the full day quickly broadened over the Mediterranean. With the advent of the light the salt of the sea seemed stronger, and there certainly arose a new freshness in the following air, but as yet no land appeared. Until at last, seated as I was alone in the fore part of the vessel, I clearly saw a small unchanging shape far off before me, peaked upon the horizon and grey like a cloud. This I watched, wondering what its name might be, who lived upon it, or what its fame was, for it was certainly land.

I watched in this manner for some hours—perhaps for two—when the island, now grown higher, was so near that I could see trees upon it, but they were set sparsely, as trees are on a dry land, and most of them seemed to be thorn trees.

It was at this moment that a man who had been singing to himself in a low tone aft came up to me and told me that this island was called the Island of Goats and that there were no men upon it to his knowledge, that it was a lonely place and worth little. But by this time there had risen beyond the Island of Goats another and much larger land.

It lay all along the north in a mountainous belt of blue, and any man coming to it for the first time or unacquainted with maps would have said to himself "I have found a considerable place." And, indeed, the name of the island indicates this, for it is called Majorca, "The Larger Land." Towards this, past the Island of Goats, and past the Strait,

we continued to sail with a light breeze for hours, until at last we could see on this shore also sparse trees, but most of them were olive trees, and they were relieved with the green of cultivation up the high mountain sides and with the white houses of men

The deck was now crowded with people, most of whom were coming back to their own country after an exile in Africa among un-Christian and dangerous things. The little children who had not yet known Europe, having been born beyond the sea, were full of wonder, but their parents, who knew the shortness of human life and its trouble, were happy because they had come back at last and saw before them the known jetties and the familiar hills of home. As I was surrounded by so much happiness, I myself felt as though I had come to the end of a long journey and was reaching my own place, though I was, in reality, bound for Barcelona, and after that up northward through the Cerdagne, and after that to Perigord, and after that to the Channel, and so to Sussex, where all journeys end.

The harbour had about it that Mediterranean-go-as-you-please which everywhere in the Mediterranean distinguishes harbours. It was as though the men of that sea had said "It never blows for long let us build ourselves a rough refuge and to-morrow sail away." We neared this harbour, but we flew no flag and made no signal. Beneath us the water was so clear that all one need have done to have brought the vessel in if one had not known the channel would have been to lean over the side and to keep the boy at the helm off the very evident shallows and the crusted rocks by gestures of one's hands, for the fairway was like a trench, deep and blue. So we slid into Palma haven, and as we rounded the pier the light wind took us first abeam and then forward, then we let go and she swung up and was still. They lowered the sails.

The people who were returning were so full of activity and joy that it was like a hive of bees, but I no longer felt this as I had felt their earlier and more subdued emotion, for the place was no longer distant or mysterious, as it had been when first its sons and daughters had come up on deck to welcome it and had given me part of their

delight It was now an evident and noisy town, hot, violent, and strong The houses had about them a certain splendour, the citizens upon the quays a satisfied and prosperous look Its streets, where they ran down towards the sea, were charmingly clean and cared for, and the architecture of its wealthier mansions seemed to me at once unusual and beautiful, for I had not yet seen Spain Each house, so far as I could make out from the water, was entered by a fine sculptured porch which gave into a cool courtyard with arcades under it, and most of the larger houses had escutcheons carved in stone upon their walls

But what most pleased me and also seemed most strange was to see against the East a vast cathedral quite Northern in outline, except for a severity and discipline of which the North is incapable save when it has steeped itself in the terseness of the classics

This monument was far larger than anything in the town It stood out separate from the town and dominated it upon its seaward side, somewhat as might an isolated hill, a shore fortress of rock It was almost bare of ornament, its stones were very carefully worked and closely fitted, and little waves broke ceaselessly along the base of its rampart Landwards, a mass of low houses which seemed to touch the body of the building did but emphasise its height When I had landed I made at once for this cathedral, and with every step it grew greater.

We who are of the North are accustomed to the enormous; we have unearthly sunsets and the clouds magnify our hills The Southern men see nothing but misproportion in what is enormous They love to have things in order, and violence in art is odious to them This high and dreadful roof had not been raised under the influences of the island, it had surely been designed just after the re-conquest from the Mohammedans, when a turbulent army, not only of Gascons and Catalans, but of Normans also and of Frisians and of Rhenish men, had poured across the water and had stormed the sea-walls On this account the cathedral had about it, in its sky-line and in its immensity and in the Gothic point of its windows a Northern air But in its austerity and in its magnificence it was Spaniard.

As I passed the little porch of entry in the side wall I saw a man. He was standing silent and alone, he was not blind and perhaps not poor, and as I passed he begged the charity not of money but of prayers. When I had entered the cool and darkness of the nave, his figure still remained in my mind, and I could not forget it. I remembered the straw hat upon his head and the suit of blue canvas which he wore, and the rough staff of wood in his hand. I was especially haunted by his expression, which was patient and masqued as though he were enduring a pain and chose to hide it.

The nave was empty. It was a great hollow that echoed and re-echoed, there were no shrines and no lamps, and no men or women praying, and therefore the figure at the door filled my mind more and more, until I went out and asked him if he was in need of money, of which at that moment I had none. He answered that his need was not for money but only for prayers.

"Why," said I, "do you need prayers?"

He said it was because his fate was upon him.

I think he spoke the truth. He was standing erect and with dignity, his eyes were not disturbed, and he repeatedly refused the alms of passers-by.

"No one," said I, "should yield to these moods."

He answered nothing, but looked pensive like a man gazing at a landscape and remembering his life.

But it was now the hour when the ship was to be sailing again, and I could not linger, though I wished very much to talk more with him. I begged him to name a shrine where a gift might be of especial value to him. He said that he was attached to no one shrine more than to any other, and then I went away regretfully, remembering how earnestly he had asked for prayers.

This was in Palma of Majorca not two years ago. There are many such men, but few who speak so humbly.

When I had got aboard again the ship sailed out and rounded a lighthouse point and then made north to Barcelona. The night fell, and next morning there rose before us the winged figures that crown the Custom House of that port and are an introduction to the glories of Spain.

## V

# THE HERALDS OF THE REVOLUTION

BY LORD ACTON

THE revenue of France was near twenty millions when Lewis XVI, finding it inadequate, called upon the nation for supply. In a single lifetime it rose to far more than one hundred millions, while the national income grew still more rapidly, and this increase was wrought by a class to whom the ancient monarchy denied its best rewards, and whom it deprived of power in the country they enriched. As their industry effected change in the distribution of property, and wealth ceased to be the prerogative of a few, the excluded majority perceived that their disabilities rested on no foundation of right and justice, and were unsupported by reasons of State. They proposed that the prizes in the Government, the Army, and the Church should be given to merit among the active and necessary portion of the people, and that no privilege injurious to them should be reserved for the unprofitable minority. Being nearly an hundred to one, they deemed that they were virtually the substance of the nation, and they claimed to govern themselves with a power proportioned to their numbers. They demanded that the State should be reformed, that the ruler should be their agent, not their master.

That is the French Revolution. To see that it is not a meteor from the unknown, but the product of historic influences which by their union were efficient to destroy, and by their division powerless to construct, we must follow for a moment the procession of ideas that went before, and bind it to the law of continuity and the operation of constant forces.

If France failed where other nations have succeeded, and if the passage from the feudal and aristocratic forms of society to the industrial and democratic was attended by convulsions, the cause was not in the men of that day, but in the ground on which they stood. As long as the despotic kings were victorious abroad, they were accepted at home. The first signals of revolutionary thinking lurk dimly among the oppressed minorities during intervals of disaster. The Jansenists were loyal and patient, but their famous jurist Domat was a philosopher, and is remembered as the writer who restored the supremacy of reason in the chaotic jurisprudence of the time. He had learnt from St Thomas, a great name in the school he belonged to, that legislation ought to be for the people and by the people, that the cashiering of bad kings may be not only a right but a duty. He insisted that law shall proceed from common-sense, not from custom, and shall draw its precepts from an eternal code. The principle of the higher law signifies Revolution. No government founded on positive enactments only can stand before it, and it points the way to that system of primitive, universal, and infeasible rights which the lawyers of the Assembly, descending from Domat, prefixed to their constitution.

Under the Edict of Nantes the Protestants were decided royalists, so that, even after the Revocation, Bayle, the apostle of Toleration, retained his loyalty in exile at Rotterdam. His enemy, Jurieu, though intolerant as a divine, was liberal in his politics, and contracted in the neighbourhood of William of Orange the temper of a continental Whig. He taught that sovereignty comes from the people and reverts to the people. The Crown forfeits powers it has made ill use of. The rights of the nation cannot be forfeited. The people alone possess an authority which is legitimate without conditions, and their acts are valid even when they are wrong. The most telling of Jurieu's seditious propositions, preserved in the transparent amber of Bossuet's reply, shared the immortality of a classic, and in time contributed to the doctrine that the democracy is irresponsible and must have its way.

Maultrot, the best ecclesiastical lawyer of the day, published three volumes in 1790 on the power of the people over kings, in which, with accurate research among sources very familiar to him and to nobody else, he explained how the Canon Law approves the principles of 1688 and rejects the modern invention of divine right. His book explains still better the attitude of the clergy in the Revolution, and their brief season of popularity.

The true originator of the opposition in literature was Fénelon. He was neither an innovating reformer nor a discoverer of new truth, but, as a singularly independent and most intelligent witness, he was the first who saw through the majestic hypocrisy of the court, and knew that France was on the road to ruin. The revolt of conscience began with him before the glory of the monarchy was clouded over. His views grow from an extraordinary perspicacity and refinement in the estimate of men. He learnt to refer the problem of government, like the conduct of private life, to the mere standard of morals, and extended further than anyone the plain but hazardous practice of deciding all things by the exclusive precepts of enlightened virtue. If he did not know all about policy and international science, he could always tell what would be expected of a hypothetically perfect man. Fénelon feels like a citizen of Christian Europe, but he pursues his thoughts apart from his country or his Church, and his deepest utterances are in the mouth of pagans. He desired to be alike true to his own beliefs, and gracious towards those who dispute them. He approved neither the deposing power nor the punishment of error, and declared that the highest need of the Church was not victory but liberty. Through his friends, Fleury and Chevreuse, he favoured the recall of the Protestants, and he advised a general toleration. He would have the secular power kept aloof from ecclesiastical concerns, because protection leads to religious servitude and persecution to religious hypocrisy. There were moments when his steps seemed to approach the border of the undiscovered land where Church and State are parted.

He has written that a historian ought to be neutral

between other countries and his own, and he expected the same discipline in politicians, as patriotism cannot absolve a man from his duty to mankind. Therefore no war can be just, unless a war to which we are compelled in the sole cause of freedom. Fénelon wished that France should surrender the ill-gotten conquests of which she was so proud, and especially that she should withdraw from Spain. He declared that the Spaniards were degenerate and imbecile, but that nothing could make that right which was contrary to the balance of power and the security of nations. Holland seemed to him the hope of Europe, and he thought the allies justified in excluding the French dynasty from Spain for the same reason that no claim of law could have made it right that Philip II should occupy England. He hoped that his country would be thoroughly humbled, for he dreaded the effects of success on the temperament of the victorious French. He deemed it only fair that Lewis should be compelled to dethrone his grandson with his own guilty hand.

In the judgment of Fénelon, power is poison, and as kings are nearly always bad, they ought not to govern, but only to execute the law. For it is the mark of barbarians to obey precedent and custom. Civilised society must be regulated by a solid code. Nothing but a constitution can avert arbitrary power. The despotism of Lewis XIV. renders him odious and contemptible, and is the cause of all the evils which the country suffers. If the governing power which rightfully belonged to the nation was restored, it would save itself by its own exertion, but absolute authority irreparably saps its foundations, and is bringing on a revolution by which it will not be moderated, but utterly destroyed. Although Fénelon has no wish to sacrifice either the monarchy or the aristocracy, he betrays sympathy with several tendencies of the movement which he foresaw with so much alarm. He admits the state of nature, and thinks civil society not the primitive condition of man, but a result of the passage from savage life to husbandry. He would transfer the duties of government to local and central assemblies; and he demands entire freedom of trade, and education provided



by law, because children belong to the State first and to the family afterwards. He does not resign the hope of making men good by act of parliament, and his belief in public institutions as a means of moulding individual character brings him nearly into touch with a distant future.

He is the Platonic founder of revolutionary thinking. Whilst his real views were little known, he became a popular memory, but some complained that his force was centrifugal, and that a church can no more be preserved by suavity and distinction than a state by liberty and justice. Lewis XVI, we are often told, perished in expiation of the sins of his forefathers. He perished, not because the power he inherited from them had been carried to excess, but because it had been discredited and undermined. One author of this discredit was Fénelon. Until he came, the ablest men, Bossuet and even Bayle, revered the monarchy. Fénelon struck it at the zenith, and treated Lewis XIV in all his grandeur more severely than the disciples of Voltaire treated Lewis XV in all his degradation. The season of scorn and shame begins with him. The best of his later contemporaries followed his example, and laid the basis of opposing criticism on motives of religion. They were the men whom Cardinal Dubois describes as dreamers of the same dreams as the chimerical archbishop of Cambray. Their influence fades away before the great change that came over France about the middle of the century.

From that time unbelief so far prevailed that even men who were not professed assailants, as Montesquieu, Condillao, Turgot, were estranged from Christianity. Politically, the consequence was this: men who did not attribute any deep significance to Church questions never acquired definite notions on Church and State, never seriously examined under what conditions religion may be established or disestablished, endowed or disendowed, never even knew whether there exists any general solution, or any principle by which problems of that kind are decided. This defect of knowledge became a fact of importance at a turning-point in the Revolution. The

theory of the relations between states and churches is bound up with the theory of Toleration, and on that subject the eighteenth century scarcely rose above an intermittent, embarrassed, and unscientific view. For religious liberty is composed of the properties both of religion and of liberty, and one of its factors never became an object of disinterested observation among actual leaders of opinion. They preferred the argument of doubt to the argument of certitude, and sought to defeat intolerance by casting out revelation as they had defeated the persecution of witches by casting out the devil. There remained a flaw in their liberalism, for liberty apart from belief is liberty with a good deal of the substance taken out of it. The problem is less complicated and the solution less radical and less profound. Already, then, there were writers who held somewhat superficially the conviction, which Tocqueville made a corner-stone, that nations that have not the self-governing force of religion within them are unprepared for freedom.

The early notions of reform moved on French lines, striving to utilise the existing form of society, to employ the parliamentary aristocracy, to revive the States-General and the provincial assemblies. But the scheme of standing on the ancient ways, and raising a new France on the substructure of the old, brought out the fact that whatever growth of institutions there once had been had been stunted and stood still. If the mediæval polity had been fitted to prosper, its fruit must be gathered from other countries, where the early notions had been pursued far ahead. The first thing to do was to cultivate the foreign example, and with that what we call the eighteenth century began. The English superiority, proclaimed first by Voltaire, was further demonstrated by Montesquieu. For England had recently created a government which was stronger than the institutions that had stood on antiquity. Founded upon fraud and treason, it had yet established the security of law more firmly than it had ever existed under the system of legitimacy, of prolonged inheritance, and of religious sanction. It flourished on the unaccustomed belief that theological dissensions need not detract from

the power of the State, while political dissensions are the very secret of its prosperity. The men of questionable character who accomplished the change, and had governed for the better part of sixty years, had successfully maintained public order, in spite of conspiracy and rebellion, they had built up an enormous system of national credit, and had been victorious in continental war. The Jacobite doctrine, which was the basis of European monarchy, had been backed by the arms of France, and had failed to shake the newly planted throne. A great experiment had been crowned by a great discovery. A novelty that defied the wisdom of centuries had made good its footing, and revolution had become a principle of stability more sure than tradition.

Montesquieu undertook to make the disturbing fact avail in political science. He valued it because it reconciled him with monarchy. He had started with the belief that kings are an evil, and not a necessary evil, and that their time was running short. His visit to Walpolean England taught him a plan by which they might be reprieved. He still confessed that a republic is the reign of virtue, and by virtue he meant love of equality and renunciation of self. But he had seen a monarchy that throve by corruption. He said that the distinctive principle of monarchy is not virtue but honour, which he once described as a contrivance to enable men of the world to commit almost every offence with impunity. The praise of England was made less injurious to French patriotism by the famous theory that explains institutions and character by the barometer and the latitude. Montesquieu looked about him, and abroad, but not far ahead. His admirable skill in supplying reason for every positive fact sometimes confounds the cause which produces with the argument that defends. He knows so many pleas for privilege that he almost overlooks the class that has none, and having no friendship for the clergy, he approves their immunities. He thinks that aristocracy alone can preserve monarchies, and makes England more free than any commonwealth. He lays down the great conservative maxim, that success generally depends on knowing the

time it will take, and the most purely Whig maxim in his works, that the duty of a citizen is a crime when it obscures the duty of man, is Fénelon's. His liberty is of a Gothic type, and not insatiable. But the motto of his work, *Prolem sine matre creatam*, was intended to signify that the one thing wanting was liberty, and he had views on taxation, equality, and the division of powers that gave him a momentary influence in 1789. His warning that a legislature may be more dangerous than the executive remained unheard. The *Esprit des lois* had lost ground in 1767, during the ascendancy of Rousseau. The mind of the author moved within the conditions of society familiar to him, and he did not heed the coming democracy. He assured Hume that there would be no revolution, because the nobles were without civic courage.

There was more divination in d'Argenson, who was Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1745, and knew politics from the inside. Less acquiescent than his brilliant contemporary, he was perpetually contriving schemes of fundamental change, and is the earliest writer from whom we can extract the system of 1789. Others before him had perceived the impending revolution, but d'Argenson foretold that it would open with the slaughter of priests in the streets of Paris. Thirty-eight years later these words came true at the gate of St. Germain's Abbey. As the supporter of the Pretender, he was quite uninfluenced by admiration for England, and imputed, not to the English Deists and Whigs, but to the Church and her divisions and intolerance, the unbelieving spirit that threatened both Church and State. It was conventionally understood on the Continent that 1688 had been an uprising of Nonconformists, and a Whig was assumed to be a Presbyterian down to the death of Anne. It was easy to infer that a more violent theological conflict would lead to a more violent convulsion. As early as 1743 his terrible foresight discerns that the State is going to pieces, and its doom was so certain that he began to think of a refuge under other masters. He would have deposed the noble, the priest, and the lawyer, and given their power to the masses. Although the science of politics was in

its infancy, he relied on the dawning enlightenment to establish rational liberty, and the equality between classes and religions which is the perfection of politics. The world ought to be governed not by parchment and vested rights, but by plain reason, which proceeds from the complex to the simple, and will sweep away all that interposes between the State and the democracy, giving to each part of the nation the management of its own affairs. He is eager to change everything, except the monarchy which alone can change all else. A deliberative assembly does not rise above the level of its average members. It is neither very foolish nor very wise. All might be well if the king made himself the irresistible instrument of philosophy and justice, and wrought the reform. But his king was Lewis XV. D'Argenson saw so little that was worthy to be preserved that he did not shrink from sweeping judgments and abstract propositions. By his rationalism, and his indifference to the prejudice of custom and the claim of possession, by his maxim that every man may be presumed to understand the things in which his own interest and responsibility are involved, by his zeal for democracy, equality, and simplicity, and his dislike of intermediate authorities, he belongs to a generation later than his own. He heralded events without preparing them, for the best of all he wrote only became known in our time.

Whilst Montesquieu, at the height of his fame as the foremost of living writers, was content to contemplate the past, there was a student in the Paris seminary who taught men to fix hope and endeavour on the future, and led the world at twenty-three. Turgot, when he proclaimed that upward growth and progress is the law of human life, was studying to become a priest. To us, in an age of science, it has become difficult to imagine Christianity without the attribute of development and the faculty of improving society as well as souls. But the idea was acquired slowly. Under the burden of sin, men accustomed themselves to the consciousness of degeneracy, each generation confessed that they were unworthy children of their parents, and awaited with impatience the approaching end. From

Lucretius and Seneca to Pascal and Leibniz we encounter a few dispersed and unsupported passages, suggesting advance towards perfection, and the flame that brightens as it moves from hand to hand, but they were without mastery or radiance. Turgot at once made the idea habitual and familiar, and it became a pervading force in thoughtful minds, whilst the new sciences arose to confirm it. He imparted a deeper significance to history, giving it unity of tendency and direction, constancy where there had been motion, and development instead of change. The progress he meant was moral as much as intellectual, and as he professed to think that the rogues of his day would have seemed sanctified models to an earlier century, he made his calculations without counting the wickedness of men. His analysis left unfathomed depths for future explorers, for Lessing and still more for Hegel, but he taught mankind to expect that the future would be unlike the past, that it would be better, and that the experience of ages may instruct and warn, but cannot guide or control. He is eminently a benefactor to historical study, but he forged a weapon charged with power to abolish the product of history and the existing order. By the hypothesis of progress, the new is always gaining on the old, history is the embodiment of imperfection, and escape from history became the watchword of the coming day. Condorcet, the master's pupil, thought that the world might be emancipated by burning its records.

Turgot was too discreet for such an excess, and he looked to history for the demonstration of his law. He had come upon it in his theological studies. He renounced them soon after, saying that he could not wear a mask. When Guizot called Lamennais a malefactor, because he threw off his cassock and became a freethinker, Scherer, whose course had been some way parallel, observed "He little knows how much it costs." The abrupt transition seems to have been accomplished by Turgot without a struggle. The *Encyclopædia*, which was the largest undertaking since the invention of printing, came out at that time, and Turgot wrote for it. But he broke off, refusing to be connected with a party professedly hostile

to revealed religion, and he rejected the declamatory paradoxes of Diderot and Raynal. He found his home among the Physiocrats, of all the groups the one that possessed the most compact body of consistent views, and who already knew most of the accepted doctrines of political economy, although they ended by making way for Adam Smith. They are of supreme importance to us, because they founded political science on the economic science which was coming into existence. Harrington, a century before, had seen that the art of government can be reduced to system, but the French economists precede all men in this, that holding a vast collection of combined and verified truths on matters contiguous to politics and belonging to their domain, they extended it to the whole, and governed the constitution by the same fixed principles that governed the purse. They said: A man's most sacred property is his labour. It is anterior even to the right of property, for it is the possession of those who own nothing else. Therefore he must be free to make the best use of it he can. The interference of one man with another, of society with its members, of the state with the subject, must be brought down to the lowest dimension. Power intervenes only to restrict intervention, to guard the individual from oppression—that is, from regulation in an interest not his own. Free labour and its derivative free trade are the first conditions of legitimate government. Let things fall into their natural order, let society govern itself, and the sovereign function of the State will be to protect Nature in the execution of her own law. Government must not be arbitrary, but it must be powerful enough to repress arbitrary action in others. If the supreme power is needlessly limited, the secondary powers will run riot and oppress. Its supremacy will bear no check. The problem is to enlighten the ruler, not to restrain him, and one man is more easily enlightened than many. Government by opposition, by balance and control, is contrary to principle, whereas absolutism might be requisite to the attainment of their higher purpose. Nothing less than concentrated power could overcome the obstacles to such beneficent reforms.

as they meditated Men who sought only the general good must wound every distinct and separate interest of class, and would be mad to break up the only force that they could count upon, and thus to throw away the means of preventing the evils that must follow if things were left to the working of opinion and the feeling of masses They had no love for absolute power in itself, but they computed that, if they had the use of it for five years, France would be free They distinguished an arbitrary monarch and the irresistible but impersonal state

It was the era of repentant monarchy Kings had become the first of public servants, executing, for the good of the people, what the people were unable to do for themselves, and there was a reforming movement on foot which led to many instances of prosperous and intelligent administration To men who knew what unutterable suffering and wrong were inflicted by bad laws, and who lived in terror of the uneducated and inorganic masses, the idea of reform from above seemed preferable to parliamentary government managed by Newcastle and North, in the interest of the British landlord The economists are outwardly and avowedly less liberal than Montesquieu, because they are incomparably more impressed by the evils of the time, and the need of immense and fundamental changes They prepared to undo the work of absolutism by the hand of absolutism They were not its opponents, but its advisers, and hoped to convert it by their advice The indispensable liberties are those which constitute the wealth of nations, the rest will follow. The disease had lasted too long for the sufferer to heal himself the relief must come from the author of his sufferings The power that had done the wrong was still efficient to undo the wrong Transformation, infinitely more difficult in itself than preservation, was not more formidable to the economists because it consisted mainly in revoking the godless work of a darker age They deemed it their mission not to devise new laws, for that is a task which God has not committed to man, but only to declare the inherent laws of the existence of society and enable them to prevail

The defects of the social and political organisation



were as distinctly pointed out by the economists as by the electors of the National Assembly, twenty years later, and in nearly all things they proposed the remedy. But they were persuaded that the only thing to regenerate France was a convulsion which the national character would make a dreadful one. They desired a large scheme of popular education, because commands take no root in soil that is not prepared. Political truths can be made so evident that the opinion of an instructed public will be invincible, and will banish the abuse of power. To resist oppression is to make a league with heaven, and all things are oppressive that resist the natural order of freedom. For society secures rights; it neither bestows nor restricts them. They are the direct consequence of duties. As truth can only convince by the exposure of errors and the defeat of objections, liberty is the essential guard of truth. Society is founded, not on the will of man, but on the nature of man and the will of God; and conformity to the divinely appointed order is followed by inevitable reward. Relief of those who suffer is the duty of all men, and the affair of all.

Such was the spirit of that remarkable group of men, especially of Mercier de la Rivière, of whom Diderot said that he alone possessed the true and everlasting secret of the security and the happiness of empires. Turgot indeed had failed in office, but his reputation was not diminished, and the power of his name exceeded all others at the outbreak of the Revolution. His policy of employing the Crown to reform the State was at once rejected in favour of other counsels, but his influence may be traced in many acts of the Assembly, and on two very memorable occasions it was not auspicious. It was a central dogma of the party that land is the true source of wealth, or, as Asgill said, that man deals in nothing but earth. When a great part of France became national property, men were the more easily persuaded that land can serve as the basis of public credit and of unlimited *assignats*. According to a weighty opinion which we shall have to consider before long, the parting of the ways in the Revolution was on the day when, rejecting

the example both of England and America, the French resolved to institute a single undivided legislature. It was the Pennsylvanian model; and Voltaire had pronounced Pennsylvania the best government in the world. Franklin gave the sanction of an oracle to the constitution of his state, and Turgot was its vehement protagonist in Europe.

A king ruling over a level democracy, and a democracy ruling itself through the agency of a king, were long contending notions in the first Assembly. One was monarchy according to Turgot, the other was monarchy adapted to Rousseau, and the latter, for a time, prevailed. Rousseau was the citizen of a small republic, consisting of a single town, and he professed to have applied its example to the government of the world. It was Geneva, not as he saw it, but as he extracted its essential principle,<sup>r</sup> and as it has since become, Geneva illustrated by the Forest Cantons and the Landsgemeinde more than by its own charters. The idea was that the grown men met in the market-place, like the peasants of Glarus under their trees, to manage their affairs, making and unmaking officials, conferring and revoking powers. They were equal, because every man had exactly the same right to defend his interest by the guarantee of his vote. The welfare of all was safe in the hands of all, for they had not the separate interests that are bred by the egotism of wealth, nor the exclusive views that come from a distorted education. All being equal in power and similar in purpose, there can be no just cause why some should move apart and break into minorities. There is an implied contract that no part shall ever be preferred to the whole, and minorities shall always obey. Clever men are not wanted for the making of laws, because clever men and their laws are at the root of all mischief. Nature is a better guide than civilisation, because nature comes from God, and His works are good, culture from man, whose works are bad in proportion as he is remoter from natural innocence, as his desires increase upon him, as he seeks more refined pleasures, and stores up more superfluity. It promotes inequality, selfishness, and the ruin of public spirit.

By plausible and easy stages the social ideas latent in parts of Switzerland produced the theory that men come innocent from the hands of the Creator, that they are originally equal, that progress from equality to civilisation is the passage from virtue to vice and from freedom to tyranny, that the people are sovereign, and govern by powers given and taken away, that an individual or a class may be mistaken and may desert the common cause and the general interest, but the people, necessarily sincere, and true, and incorrupt, cannot go wrong, that there is a right of resistance to all governments that are fallible, because they are partial, but none against government of the people by the people, because it has no master and no judge, and decides in the last instance and alone, that insurrection is the law of all unpopular societies founded on a false principle and a broken contract, and submission that of the only legitimate societies, based on the popular will, that there is no privilege against the law of nature, and no right against the power of all. By this chain of reasoning, with little infusion of other ingredients, Rousseau applied the sequence of the ideas of pure democracy to the government of nations.

Now the most glaring and familiar fact in history shows that the direct self-government of a town cannot be extended over an empire. It is a plan that scarcely reaches beyond the next parish. Either one district will be governed by another, or both by somebody else chosen for the purpose. Either plan contradicts first principles. Subjection is the direct negation of democracy, representation is the indirect. So that an Englishman underwent bondage to parliament as much as Lausanne to Berne or as America to England if it had submitted to taxation, and by law recovered his liberty but once in seven years. Consequently Rousseau, still faithful to Swiss precedent as well as to the logic of his own theory, was a federalist. In Switzerland, when one half of a canton disagrees with the other, or the country with the town, it is deemed natural that they should break into two, that the general will may not oppress minorities. This multiplication of self-governing communities was admitted

by Rousseau as a preservative of unanimity on one hand, and of liberty on the other. Helvétius came to his support with the idea that men are not only equal by nature but alike, and that society is the cause of variation, from which it would follow that everything may be done by laws and by education.

Rousseau is the author of the strongest political theory that had appeared amongst men. We cannot say that he reasons well, but he knew how to make his argument seem convincing, satisfying, inevitable, and he wrote with an eloquence and a fervour that had never been seen in prose, even in Bolingbroke or Milton. His books gave the first signal of a universal subversion, and were as fatal to the Republic as to the Monarchy. Although he lives by the social contract and the law of resistance, and owes his influence to what was extreme and systematic, his later writings are loaded with sound political wisdom. He owes nothing to the novelty or the originality of his thoughts. Taken jointly or severally, they are old friends, and you will find them in the school of Wolf that just preceded, in the dogmatists of the Great Rebellion and the Jesuit casuists who were dear to Algernon Sidney, in their Protestant opponents, Duplessis Mornay, and the Scots who had heard the last of our schoolmen, Major of St Andrews, renew the speculations of the time of schism, which decomposed and dissected the Church and rebuilt it on a model very propitious to political revolution, and even in the early interpreters of the Aristotelian Politics which appeared just at the era of the first parliament.

Rousseau's most advanced point was the doctrine that the people are infallible. Jurieu had taught that they can do no wrong, Rousseau added that they are positively in the right. The idea, like most others, was not new, and goes back to the Middle Ages. When the question arose what security there is for the preservation of traditional truth if the episcopate was divided and the papacy vacant, it was answered that the faith would be safely retained by the masses. The maxim that the voice of the people is the voice of God is as old as Alcuin; it was renewed by some of the greatest writers anterior to

democracy, by Hooker and Bossuet, and it was employed in our day by Newman to prop his theory of development. Rousseau applied it to the State.

The sovereignty of public opinion was just then coming in through the rise of national debts and the increasing importance of the public creditor. It meant more than the noble savage and the blameless South Sea islander, and distinguished the instinct that guides large masses of men from the calculating wisdom of the few. It was destined to prove the most serious of all obstacles to representative government. Equality of power readily suggests equality of property, but the movement of Socialism began earlier, and was not assisted by Rousseau. There were solemn theorists, such as Mably and Morelly, who were sometimes quoted in the Revolution, but the change in the distribution of property was independent of them.

A more effective influence was imported from Italy, for the Italians, through Vico, Giannone, Genovesi, had an eighteenth century of their own. Sardinia preceded France in solving the problem of feudalism. Arthur Young affirms that the measures of the Grand Duke Leopold had, in ten years, doubled the produce of Tuscany, at Milan, Count Firmian was accounted one of the best administrators in Europe. It was a Milanese, Beccaria, who, by his reform of criminal law, became a leader of French opinion. Continental jurisprudence had long been overshadowed by two ideas: that torture is the surest method of discovering truth, and that punishment deters not by its justice, its celerity, or its certainty, but in proportion to its severity. Even in the eighteenth century the penal system of Maria Theresa and Joseph II was barbarous. Therefore no attack was more surely aimed at the heart of established usage than that which dealt with courts of justice. It forced men to conclude that authority was odiously stupid and still more odiously ferocious, that existing governments were accursed, that the guardians and ministers of law, divine and human, were more guilty than their culprits. The past was branded as the reign of infernal powers, and charged with long arrears of unpunished wrong. As there was no

sanctity left in law, there was no mercy for its merciless defenders, and if they fell into avenging hands, their doom would not exceed their desert. Men afterwards conspicuous by their violence, Brissot and Marat, were engaged in this campaign of humanity, which raised a demand for authorities that were not vitiated by the accumulation of infamy, for new laws, new powers, a new dynasty.

As religion was associated with cruelty, it is at this point that the movement of new ideas became a crusade against Christianity. A book by the Curé Meslier, partially known at that time, but first printed by Strauss in 1864, is the clarion of vindictive unbelief, and another abbé, Raynal, hoped that the clergy would be crushed beneath the ruins of their altars.

Thus the movement which began, in Fénelon's time, with warnings and remonstrance and the zealous endeavour to preserve, which produced one great scheme of change by the Crown and another at the expense of the Crown, ended in the wild cry for vengeance and a passionate appeal to fire and sword. So many lines of thought converging on destruction explain the agreement that existed when the States-General began, and the explosion that followed the reforms of '89 and the ruins of '93. No conflict can be more irreconcilable than that between a constitution and an enlightened absolutism, between abrogation of old laws and multiplication of new, between representation and direct democracy, the people controlling and the people governing, kings by contract and kings by mandate.

Yet all these fractions of opinion were called Liberal Montesquieu, because he was an intelligent Tory, Voltaire, because he attacked the clergy, Turgot, as a reformer, Rousseau, as a democrat, Diderot, as a freethinker. The one thing common to them all is the disregard for liberty.

## VI

### LAUGHTER

BY MAX BEERBOHM

M BERGSON, in his well-known essay on this theme, says—well, he says many things, but none of these, though I have just read them, do I clearly remember, nor am I sure that in the act of reading I understood any of them. That is the worst of these fashionable philosophers—or rather, the worst of me. Somehow I never manage to read them till they are just going out of fashion, and even then I don't seem able to cope with them. About twelve years ago, when everyone suddenly talked to me about Pragmatism and William James, I found myself moved by a dull but irresistible impulse to try Schopenhauer, of whom, years before that, I had heard that he was the easiest reading in the world, and the most exciting and amusing. I wrestled with Schopenhauer for a day or so, in vain. Time passed, M Bergson appeared "and for his hour was lord of the ascendant", I tardily tackled William James. I bore in mind, as I approached him, the testimonials that had been lavished on him by all my friends. Alas, I was insensible to his thrillingness. His gaiety did not make me gay. His crystal clarity confused me dreadfully. I could make nothing of William James. And now, in the fullness of time, I have been floored by M. Bergson.

It distresses me, this failure to keep pace with the leaders of thought as they pass into oblivion. It makes me wonder whether I am, after all, an absolute fool. Yet surely I am not that. Tell me of a man or a woman, a place or an event, real or fictitious: surely you will find me a fairly intelligent listener. Any such narrative will

present to me some image, and will starve me to not altogether fatuous thoughts. Come to me in some grievous difficulty. I will talk to you like a father, even like a lawyer. I'll be hanged if I haven't a certain mellow wisdom. But if you are by way of weaving theories as to the nature of things in general, and if you want to try those theories on someone who will luminously confirm them or powerfully rend them, I must, with a hang-dog air, warn you that I am not your man. I suffer from a strong suspicion that things in general cannot be accounted for through any formula or set of formulæ, and that any one philosophy, howsoever new, is no better than another. That is in itself a sort of philosophy, and I suspect it accordingly, but it has for me the merit of being the only one I can make head or tail of. If you try to expound any other philosophic system to me, you will find not merely that I can detect no flaw in it (except the one great flaw just suggested), but also that I haven't, after a minute or two, the vaguest notion of what you are driving at. "Very well," you say, "instead of trying to explain all things all at once, I will explain some little, simple, single thing." It was for sake of such shorn lambs as myself, doubtless, that M. Bergson sat down and wrote about—Laughter. But I have profited by his kindness no more than if he had been treating of the Cosmos. I cannot tread even a limited space of air. I have a gross satisfaction in the crude fact of being on hard ground again, and I utter a coarse peal of—Laughter.

At least, I say I do so. In point of fact, I have merely smiled. Twenty years ago, ten years ago, I should have laughed, and have professed to you that I had merely smiled. A very young man is not content to be very young, nor even a young man to be young. He wants to share the dignity of his elders. There is no dignity in laughter, there is much of it in smiles. Laughter is but a joyous surrender, smiles give token of mature criticism. It may be that in the early ages of this world there was far more laughter than is to be heard now, and that æons hence laughter will be obsolete, and smiles universal—everyone, always, mildly, slightly, smiling. But it is less useful to speculate as to mankind's past and future than to observe



men And you will have observed with me in the club-room that young men at most times look solemn, whereas old men or men of middle age mostly smile, and also that those young men do often laugh loud and long among themselves, while we others—the gayest and best of us in the most favourable circumstances—seldom achieve more than our habitual act of smiling Does the sound of that laughter jar on us? Do we liken it to the crackling of thorns under a pot? Let us do so There is no cheerier sound But let us not assume it to be the laughter of fools because we sit quiet It is absurd to disapprove of what one envies, or to wish a good thing were no more because it has passed out of our possession

But (it seems that I must begin every paragraph by questioning the sincerity of what I have just said) *has* the gift of laughter been withdrawn from me? I protest that I do still, at the age of forty-seven, laugh often and loud and long But not, I believe, so long and loud and often as in my less smiling youth And I am proud, nowadays, of laughing, and grateful to anyone who makes me laugh That is a bad sign I no longer take laughter as a matter of course I realise, even after reading M Bergson on it, how good a thing it is I am qualified to praise it

As to what is most precious among the accessories to the world we live in, different men hold different opinions There are people whom the sea depresses, whom mountains exhilarate Personally, I want the sea always—some not populous edge of it for choice, and with it sunshine, and wine, and a little music My friend on the mountain yonder is of tougher fibre and sterner outlook, disapproves of the sea's laxity and instability, has no ear for music and no palate for the grape, and regards the sun as a rather enervating institution, like central heating in a house What he likes is a grey day and the wind in his face, crags at a great altitude, and a flask of whisky Yet I think that even he, if we were trying to determine from what inner sources mankind derives the greatest pleasure in life, would agree with me that only the emotion of love takes a higher rank than the emotion of laughter Both these emotions are partly mental, partly physical It is said

that the mental symptoms of love are wholly physical in origin. They are not the less ethereal for that. The physical sensations of laughter, on the other hand, are reached by a process whose starting-point is in the mind. They are not the less "gloriously of our clay." There is laughter that goes so far as to lose all touch with its motive, and to exist only, grossly, in itself. This is laughter at its best. A man to whom such laughter has often been granted may happen to die in a workhouse. No matter. I will not admit that he has failed in life. Another man, who has never laughed thus, may be buried in Westminster Abbey, leaving more than a million pounds overhead. What then? I regard him as a failure.

Nor does it seem to me to matter one jot how such laughter is achieved. Humour may rollick on high planes of fantasy or in depths of silliness. To many people it appeals only from those depths. If it appeal to them irresistibly, they are more enviable than those who are sensitive only to the finer kind of joke and not so sensitive as to be mastered and dissolved by it. Laughter is a thing to be rated according to its own intensity.

Many years ago I wrote an essay in which I poured scorn on the fun purveyed by the music halls, and on the great public for which that fun was quite good enough. I take that callow scorn back. I fancy that the fun itself was better than it seemed to me, and might not have displeased me if it had been wafted to me in private, in presence of a few friends. A public crowd, because of a lack of broad impersonal humanity in me, rather insulates than absorbs me. Amidst the guffaws of a thousand strangers I become unnaturally grave. If these people were the entertainment, and I the audience, I should be sympathetic enough. But to be one of them is a position that drives me spiritually aloof. Also, there is to me something rather dreary in the notion of going anywhere for the specific purpose of being amused. I prefer that laughter shall take me unawares. Only so can it master and dissolve me. And in this respect, at any rate, I am not peculiar. In music halls and such places, you may hear loud laughter, but—not see silent laughter, not see strong men weak, helpless, suffering,

gradually convalescent, dangerously relapsing    Laughter at its greatest and best is not there

To such laughter nothing is more propitious than an occasion that demands gravity. To have good reason for not laughing is one of the surest aids    Laughter rejoices in bonds    If music halls were schoolrooms for us, and the comedians were our schoolmasters, how much less talent would be needed for giving us how much more joy! Even in private and accidental intercourse, few are the men whose humour can reduce us, be we never so susceptible, to paroxysms of mirth    I will wager that nine-tenths of the world's best laughter is laughter *at*, not *with*    And it is the people set in authority over us that touch most surely our sense of the ridiculous    Freedom is a good thing, but we lose through it golden moments    The schoolmaster to his pupils, the monarch to his courtiers, the editor to his staff—how priceless they are! Reverence is a good thing, and part of its value is that the more we revere a man, the more sharply are we struck by anything in him (and there is always much) that is incongruous with his greatness    And herein lies one of the reasons why as we grow older we laugh less    The men we esteemed so great are gathered to their fathers    Some of our coevals may, for aught we know, be very great, but good heavens! we can't esteem *them* so

Of extreme laughter I know not in any annals a more satisfying example than one that is to be found in Moore's *Life of Byron*    Both Byron and Moore were already in high spirits when, on an evening in the spring of 1813, they went "from some early assembly" to Mr Rogers' house in St James's Place and were regaled there with an impromptu meal    But not high spirits alone would have led the two young poets to such excess of laughter as made the evening so very memorable    Luckily they both venerated Rogers (strange as it may seem to us) as the greatest of living poets    Luckily, too, Mr Rogers was ever the kind of man, the coldly and quietly suave kind of man, with whom you don't take liberties, if you can help it—with whom, if you *can't* help it, to take liberties is in itself a most exhumating act    And he had just received a presentation copy of Lord Thurlow's latest book, "Poems on

Several Occasions " The two young poets found in this elder's Muse much that was so execrable as to be delightful They were soon, as they turned the pages, held in throes of laughter, laughter that was but intensified by the endeavours of their correct and nettled host to point out the genuine merits of his friend's work And then suddenly—oh, joy!—"we lighted," Moore records, "on the discovery that our host, in addition to his sincere approbation of some of this book's contents, had also the motive of gratitude for standing by its author, as one of the poems was a warm and, I need not add, well-deserved panegyric on himself We were, however"—the narrative has an added charm from Tom Moore's demure care not to offend or compromise the still-surviving Rogers—"too far gone in nonsense for even this eulogy, in which we both so heartily agreed, to stop us The opening line of the poem was, as well as I can recollect, 'When Rogers o'er this labour bent', and Lord Byron undertook to read it aloud,—but he found it impossible to get beyond the first two words Our laughter had now increased to such a pitch that nothing could restrain it Two or three times he began, but no sooner had the words 'When Rogers' passed his lips, than our fit burst out afresh,—till even Mr Rogers himself, with all his feeling of our injustice, found it impossible not to join us, and we were, at last, all three in such a state of inextinguishable laughter, that, had the author himself been of our party, I question much whether he could have resisted the infection" The final fall and dissolution of Rogers, Rogers behaving as badly as either of them, is all that was needed to give perfection to this heart-warming scene I like to think that on a certain night in spring, year after year, three ghosts revisit that old room and (without, I hope, inconvenience to Lord Northcliffe, who may happen to be there) sit rocking and writhing in the grip of that old shared rapture Uncanny? Well, not more so than would have seemed to Byron and Moore and Rogers the notion that more than a hundred years away from them was someone joining in their laughter—as *I* do

Alas, I cannot join in it more than gently To imagine a scene, however vividly, does not give us the sense of being,

or even of having been, present at it. Indeed, the greater the glow of the scene reflected, the sharper is the pang of our realisation that we were *not* there, and of our annoyance that we weren't. Such a pang comes to me with special force whenever my fancy posts itself outside the Temple's gate in Fleet Street, and there, at a late hour of the night of May 10th, 1773, observes a gigantic old man laughing wildly, but having no one with him to share and aggrandise his emotion. Not that he is alone, but the young man beside him laughs only in politeness and is inwardly puzzled, even shocked. Boswell has a keen, an exquisitely keen, scent for comedy, for the fun that is latent in fine shades of character, but imaginative burlesque, anything that borders on lovely nonsense, he was not formed to savour. All the more does one revel in his account of what led up to the moment when Johnson, "to support himself, laid hold of one of the posts at the side of the foot pavement, and sent forth peals so loud that in the silence of the night his voice seemed to resound from Temple Bar to Fleet Ditch."

No evening ever had an unluckier ending. The omens were all for gloom. Johnson had gone to dine at General Paoli's, but was so ill that he had to leave before the meal was over. Later he managed to go to Mr Chambers' rooms in the Temple. "He continued to be very ill" there, but gradually felt better, and "talked with a noble enthusiasm of keeping up the representation of respectable families," and was great on "the dignity and propriety of male succession." Among his listeners, as it happened, was a gentleman for whom Mr Chambers had that day drawn up a will devising his estate to his three sisters. The news of this might have been expected to make Johnson violent in wrath. But no, for some reason he grew violent only in laughter, and insisted thenceforth on calling that gentleman The Testator and chaffing him without mercy. "I daresay he thinks he has done a mighty thing. He won't stay till he gets home to his seat in the country, to produce this wonderful deed. He'll call up the landlord of the first inn on the road, and after a suitable preface upon mortality and the uncertainty of life, will tell him that he

should not delay in making his will; and Here, Sir, will he say, is *my* will, which I have just made, with the assistance of one of the ablest lawyers in the kingdom, and he will read it to him. He believes he has made this will, but he did not make it, you, Chambers, made it for him. I hope you have had more conscience than to make him say 'being of sound understanding!' ha, ha, ha! I hope he has left me a legacy. I'd have his will turned into verse, like a ballad." These slights annoyed Mr Chambers, and are recorded by Boswell with the apology that he wishes his readers to be "acquainted with the slightest occasional characteristics of so eminent a man." Certainly, there is nothing ridiculous in the fact of a man making a will. But this is the measure of Johnson's achievement. He had created gloriously much out of nothing at all. There he sat, old and ailing and unencouraged by the company, but soaring higher and higher in absurdity, more and more rejoicing, and still soaring and rejoicing after he had gone out into the night with Boswell, till at last in Fleet Street his paroxysms were too much for him and he could no more. Echoes of that huge laughter come ringing down the ages. But is there also perhaps a note of sadness for us in them? Johnson's endless sociability came of his inherent melancholy. He could not bear to be alone, and his very mirth was but a mode of escape from the dark thoughts within him. Of these the thought of death was the most dreadful to him, and the most insistent. He was for ever wondering how death would come to him, and how he would acquit himself in the extreme moment. A later but not less devoted Anglican, meditating on his own end, wrote in his diary that "to die in church appears to be a great euthanasia, but not," he quaintly and touchingly added, "at a time to disturb worshippers." Both the sentiment here expressed and the reservation drawn would have been as characteristic of Johnson as they were of Gladstone. But to die of laughter—this, too, seems to me a great euthanasia, and I think that for Johnson to have died thus, that night in Fleet Street, would have been a grand ending to "a life radically wretched." Well, he was destined to outlive another decade; and, selfishly, who

can wish such a life as his, or such a Life as Boswell's, one jot shorter?

Strange, when you come to think of it, that of all the countless folk who have lived before our time on this planet not one is known in history or in legend as having died of laughter. Strange, too, that not to one of all the characters in romance has such an end been allotted. Has it ever struck you what a chance Shakespeare missed when he was finishing the Second Part of King Henry the Fourth? Falstaff was not the man to stand cowed and bowed while the new young king lectured him and cast him off. Little by little, as Hal proceeded in that portentous allocution, the humour of the situation would have mastered old Sir John. His face, blank with surprise at first, would presently have glowed and widened, and his whole bulk have begun to quiver. Lest he should miss one word, he would have mastered himself. But the final words would have been the signal for release of all the roars pent up in him, the welkin would have rung, the roars, belike, would have gradually subsided in dreadful rumblings of more than utterable or conquerable mirth. Thus and thus only might his life have been rounded off with dramatic fitness, *secundum ipsius naturam*. He never should have been left to babble of green fields and die "an it had been any christom child."

Falstaff is a triumph of comedic creation because we are kept laughing equally at and with him. Nevertheless, if I had the choice of sitting with him at the Boar's Head or with Johnson at the Turk's, I shouldn't hesitate for an instant. The agility of Falstaff's mind gains much of its effect by contrast with the massiveness of his body, but in contrast with Johnson's equal agility is Johnson's moral as well as physical bulk. His sallies "tell" the more startlingly because of the noble weight of character behind them; they are the better because *he* makes them. In Falstaff there isn't this final incongruity and element of surprise. Falstaff is but a sublimated sample of "the funny man." We cannot, therefore, laugh so greatly with him as with Johnson. (Nor even *at* him, because we are not tickled so much by the weak points of a character whose points

are all weak ones, also because we have no reverence trying to impose restraint upon us) Still, Falstaff has indubitably the power to convulse us I don't mean we ever are convulsed in reading Henry the Fourth. No printed page, alas, can thrill us to extremities of laughter These are ours only if the mirthmaker be a living man whose jests we hear as they come fresh from his own lips All I claim for Falstaff is that he would be able to convulse us if he were alive and accessible. Few, as I have said, are the humorists who can induce this state To master and dissolve us, to give us the joy of being worn down and tired out with laughter, is a success to be won by no man save in virtue of a rare staying-power Laughter becomes extreme only if it be consecutive There must be no pauses for recovery. Touch-and-go humour, however happy, is not enough The jester must be able to grapple his theme and hang on to it, twisting it this way and that, and making it yield magically all manner of strange and precious things, one after another, without pause He must have invention keeping pace with utterance He must be inexhaustible Only so can he exhaust us

I have a friend whom I would praise There are many other of my friends to whom I am indebted for much laughter, but I do believe that if all of them sent in their bills to-morrow and all of them overcharged me not a little, the total of all those totals would be less appalling than that which looms in my own vague estimate of what I owe to Comus Comus I call him here in observance of the line drawn between public and private virtue, and in full knowledge that he would of all men be the least glad to be quite personally thanked and laurelled in the market-place for the hours he has made memorable among his cronies No one is so diffident as he, no one so self-postponing Many people have met him again and again without faintly suspecting "anything much" in him Many of his acquaintances—friends, too—relatives, even—have lived and died in the belief that he was quite ordinary Thus is he the more greatly valued by his cronies. Thus do we pride ourselves on possessing some curious right quality to which alone he is responsive But it would seem that either



this asset of ours or its effect on him is intermittent. He can be dull and null enough with us sometimes—a mere asker of questions, or drawer of comparisons between this and that brand of cigarettes, or full expatiator on the merits of some new patent razor. A whole hour and more may be wasted in such humdrum and darkness. And then—something will have happened. There has come a spark in the murk, a flame now, presage of a radiance. Comus has begun. His face is a great part of his equipment. A cast of it might be somewhat akin to the comic mask of the ancients, but no cast could be worthy of it, mobility is the essence of it. It flickers and shifts in accord to the matter of his discourse, it contracts and it expands, is there anything its elastic can't express? Comus would be eloquent even were he dumb. And he is mellifluous. His voice, while he develops an idea or conjures up a scene, takes on a peculiar richness and unction. If he be describing an actual scene, voice and face are adaptable to those of the actual persons therein. But it is not in such mimicry that he excels. As a reporter he has rivals. For the most part, he moves on a higher plane than that of mere fact. He imagines, he creates, giving you not a person, but a type, a synthesis, and not what anywhere has been, but what anywhere might be—what, as one feels, for all the absurdity of it, just would be. He knows his world well, and nothing human is alien to him, but certain skeins of life have a special hold on him, and he on them. In his youth he wished to be a clergyman, and over the clergy of all grades and denominations his genius hovers and swoops and ranges with a special mastery. Lawyers he loves less, yet the legal mind seems to lie almost as wide-open to him as the sacerdotal, and the legal manner in all its phases he can unerringly burlesque. In the minds of journalists, diverse journalists, he is not less thoroughly at home, so that of the wild contingencies imagined by him there is none about which he cannot reel off an oral "leader" or "middle" in the likeliest style, and with as much ease as he can preach a High Church or Low Church sermon on it. Nor are his improvisations limited by prose. If a theme call for nobler treatment, he becomes an unflagging fountain of ludicrously

adequate blank-verse Or again, he may deliver himself in rhyme There is no form of utterance that comes amiss to him for interpreting the human comedy, or for broadening the farce into which that comedy is turned by him Nothing can stop him when once he is in the vein No appeals move him He goes from strength to strength while his audience is more and more piteously debilitated

What a gift to have been endowed with ! What a power to wield ! And how often I have envied *Comus* ! But this envy of him has never taken root in me His mind laughs, doubtless, at his own conceptions, but not his body And if you tell him something that you have been sure will convulse him you are likely to be rewarded with no more than a smile betokening that he sees the point Incomparable laughter-giver, he is not much a laughter He is vintner, not toper I would therefore not change places with him I am well content to have been his beneficiary during thirty years, and to be so for as many more as may be given us

# THE PROBABLE FUTURE OF MANKIND

By H G WELLS

## § 1

THE present outlook of human affairs is one that admits of broad generalisations and that seems to require broad generalisations. We are in one of those phases of experience which become cardinal in history. A series of immense and tragic events have shattered the self-complacency and challenged the will and intelligence of mankind. That easy general forward movement of human affairs which for several generations had seemed to justify the persuasion of a necessary and invincible progress, progress towards greater powers, greater happiness, and a continual enlargement of life, has been checked violently and perhaps arrested altogether. (The spectacular catastrophe of the Great War has revealed an accumulation of destructive forces in our outwardly prosperous society, of which few of us had dreamt, and it has also revealed a profound incapacity to deal with and restrain these forces.) The two years of want, confusion, and indecision that have followed the Great War in Europe and Asia, and the uncertainties that have disturbed life even in the comparatively untouched American world, seem to many watchful minds even more ominous to our social order than the war itself. What is happening to our race? they ask. Did the prosperities and confident hopes with which the twentieth century opened mark nothing more than a culmination of fortuitous good luck? Has the cycle of prosperity and progress closed? To what will this staggering and blundering, the hatreds and mischievous adventures of the present

time, bring us? Is the world in the opening of long centuries of confusion and disaster such as ended the Western Roman Empire in Europe or the Han prosperity in China? And if so, will the debacle extend to America? Or is the American (and Pacific?) system still sufficiently removed and still sufficiently autonomous to maintain a progressive movement of its own if the Old World collapse?

Some sort of answer to these questions, vast and vague though they are, we must each one of us have before we can take an intelligent interest or cast an effective vote in foreign affairs. Even though a man formulate no definite answer, he must still have an implicit persuasion before he can act in these matters. If he have no clear conclusions openly arrived at then he must act upon subconscious conclusions instinctively arrived at. Far better is it that he should bring them into the open light of thought.

The suppression of war is generally regarded as central to the complex of contemporary problems. But war is not a new thing in human experience, and for scores of centuries mankind has managed to get along in spite of its frequent recurrence. Most states and empires have been intermittently at war throughout their periods of stability and prosperity. But their warfare was not the warfare of the present time. The thing that has brought the rush of progressive development of the past century and a half to a sudden shock of arrest is not the old and familiar warfare, but warfare strangely changed and exaggerated by novel conditions. It is this change in conditions, therefore, and not war itself, which is the reality we have to analyse in its bearing upon our social and political ideas. In 1914 the European Great Powers resorted to war, as they had resorted to war on many previous occasions, to decide certain open issues. This war flamed out with an unexpected rapidity until all the world was involved, and it developed a horror, a monstrosity of destructiveness, and, above all, an inconclusiveness quite unlike any preceding war. That unlike-ness was the essence of the matter. Whatever justifications could be found for its use in the past, it became clear to

many minds that under the new conditions war was no longer a possible method of international dealing. The thing lay upon the surface. The idea of a League of Nations sustaining a Supreme World Court to supersede the arbitrament of war, did not so much arise at any particular point as break out simultaneously wherever there were intelligent men.

Now what was this change in conditions that had confronted mankind with the perplexing necessity of abandoning war? For perplexing it certainly is. War has been a ruling and constructive idea in all human societies up to the present time, few will be found to deny it. (Political institutions have very largely developed in relation to the idea of war, defence and aggression have shaped the outer form of every state in the world, just as co-operation sustained by compulsion has shaped its inner organisation.) And if abruptly man determines to give up the waging of war, he may find that this determination involves the most extensive and penetrating modifications of political and social conceptions that do not at the first glance betray any direct connection with belligerent activities at all.

It is to the general problem arising out of this consideration, that this and the three following essays<sup>1</sup> will be addressed, the question: What else has to go if war is to go out of human life? and the problem of what has to be done if it is to be banished and barred out for ever from the future experiences of our race. For let us face the truth in this matter, the abolition of war is no casting of ancient, barbaric, and now obsolete traditions, no easy and natural progressive step, the abolition of war, if it can be brought about, will be a reversal not only of the general method of human life hitherto, but of the general method of nature—the method, that is, of conflict and survival. It will be a new phase in the history of life, and not simply an incident in the history of man. These brief essays will attempt to present something like the true dimensions of the task before mankind if war is indeed to be superseded, and to show that the project of abolishing war by the occasional meeting of some Council of a League

<sup>1</sup> In Mr Wells' book.

of Nations or the like, is, in itself, about as likely to succeed as a proposal to abolish thirst, hunger, and death by a short legislative act

Let us first examine the change in the conditions of human life that has altered war from a normal aspect of the conflict for existence of human societies into a terror and a threat for the entire species. The change is essentially a change in the amount of power available for human purposes, and more particularly in the amount of material power that can be controlled by one individual. Human society up to a couple of centuries ago was essentially a man-power and horse-power system. There was, in addition, a certain limited use of water power and wind power, but that was not on a scale to affect the general truth of the proposition. The first intimation of the great change began seven centuries ago with the appearance of explosives. In the thirteenth century the Mongols made a very effective military use of the Chinese discovery of gunpowder. They conquered most of the known world, and their introduction of a low-grade explosive in warfare rapidly destroyed the immunity of castles and walled cities, abolished knighthood, and utterly wrecked and devastated the irrigation system of Mesopotamia, which had been a populous and civilised region since before the beginnings of history. But the restricted metallurgical knowledge of the time set definite limits to the size and range of cannon. It was only with the nineteenth century that the large-scale production of cast steel and the growth of chemical knowledge made the military use of a variety of explosives practicable. The systematic extension of human power began in the eighteenth century with the utilisation of steam and coal. That opened a crescendo of invention and discovery which thrust rapidly increasing quantities of material energy into men's hands. Even now that crescendo may not have reached its climax.

We need not rehearse here the familiar story of the abolition of distance that ensued, how the radiogram and the telegram have made every event of importance a simultaneous event for the minds of everyone in the world, how journeys which formerly took months or weeks now take

days or hours, nor how printing and paper have made possible a universally informed community, and so forth. Nor will we describe the effect of these things upon warfare. The point that concerns us here is this, that before this age of discovery communities had fought and struggled with each other much as naughty children might do in a crowded nursery, *within the measure of their strength*. They had hurt and impoverished each other, but they had rarely destroyed each other completely. Their squabbles may have been distressing, but they were tolerable. It is even possible to regard these former wars as healthy, hardening, and invigorating conflicts. But into this nursery has come Science, and has put into the fists of these children razor blades with poison on them, bombs of frightful explosive, corrosive fluids and the like. The comparatively harmless conflicts of these infants are suddenly fraught with quite terrific possibilities, and it is only a question of sooner or later before the nursery becomes a heap of corpses or is blown to smithereens. A real nursery invaded by a reckless person distributing such gifts would be promptly saved by the intervention of the nurse, but humanity has no nurse but its own poor wisdom. And whether that poor wisdom can rise to the pitch of effectual intervention is the most fundamental problem in mundane affairs at the present time.

The deadly gifts continue. There was a steady increase in the frightfulness and destructiveness of belligerence from 1914 up to the beginning of 1918, when shortage of material and energy checked the process, and since the armistice there has been an industrious development of military science. The next well-organised war, we are assured, will be far more swift and extensive in its destruction—more particularly of the civilian population. Armies will advance no longer along roads, but extended in line, with heavy tank transport which will plough up the entire surface of the land they traverse, aerial bombing, with bombs each capable of destroying a small town, will be practicable a thousand miles beyond the military front, and the seas will be swept clear of shipping by mines and submarine activities. There will be no distinction between

combatants and non-combatants, because every able-bodied citizen, male or female, is a potential producer of food and munitious, and probably the safest, and certainly the best supplied shelters in the universal cataclysm, will be the carefully buried, sandbagged, and camouflaged general headquarters of the contending armies. Their military gentlemen of limited outlook and high professional training will, in comparative security, achieve destruction beyond their understanding. The hard logic of war which gives victory always to the most energetic and destructive combatant, will turn warfare more and more from mere operations for loot or conquest or predominance into operations for the conclusive destruction of the antagonists. A relentless thrust towards strenuousness is a characteristic of belligerent conditions. War is war, and vehemence is in its nature. You must hit always as hard as you can. Offensive and counter-offensive methods continue to prevail over merely defensive ones. The victor in the next great war will be bombed from the air, starved, and depleted almost as much as the loser. His victory will be no easy one, it will be a triumph of the exhausted and dying over the dead. It has been argued that such highly organised and long-prepared warfare as the world saw in 1914-18 is not likely to recur again for a considerable time because of the shock inflicted by it upon social stability. There may be spasmodic wars with improvised and scanty supplies, these superficially more hopeful critics admit, but there remain no communities now so stable and so sure of their people as to prepare and wage again a fully elaborated scientific war. But this view implies no happier outlook for mankind. It amounts to this, that so long as men remain disordered and impoverished they will not rise again to the full height of scientific war. But manifestly this will only be for so long as they remain disordered and impoverished. When they recover they will recover to repeat again their former disaster with whatever modern improvements and intensifications the ingenuity of the intervening time may have devised. This new phase of disorder, conflict, and social unravelling upon which we have entered, this phase of decline due to the enhanced and increasing



powers for waste and destruction in mankind, is bound, therefore, to continue so long as the divisions based upon ancient ideas of conflict remain, and if for a time the decadence seems to be arrested, it will only be to accumulate under the influence of those ideas a fresh war-storm sufficiently destructive and disorganising to restore the decadent process

Unless mankind can readjust <sup>but in a different</sup> its political and social ideas to this essential new fact of its enormously enlarged powers, unless it can eliminate or control its pugnacity, no other prospect seems open to us but decadence, at least to such a level of barbarism as to lose and forget again all the scientific and industrial achievements of our present age. Then, with its powers shrunk to their former puny scale, our race may recover some sort of balance between the injuries and advantages of conflict. Or, since our decadent species may have less vitality and vigour than it had in its primitive phases, it may dwindle and fade out altogether before some emboldened animal antagonist, or through some world-wide disease brought to it perhaps by rats and dogs and insects and what not, who may be destined to be heirs to the rusting and mouldering ruins of the cities and ports and ways and bridges of to-day.

Only one alternative to some such retrogression seems possible, and that is the conscious, systematic reconstruction of human society to avert it. The world has been brought into one community, and the human mind and will may be able to recognise and adapt itself to this fact—in time. Men, as a race, may succeed in turning their backs upon the method of warfare and the methods of conflict and in embarking upon an immense world-wide effort of co-operation and mutual toleration and salvage. They may have the vigour to abandon their age-long attempt to live in separate sovereign states, and to grapple with and master the now quite destructive force that traditional hostility has become, and bring their affairs together under one law and one peace. These new vast powers over nature which have been given to them, and which will certainly be their destruction if their purposes remain divergent and conflicting, will then be the means by which

they may set up a new order of as yet scarcely imaginable interest and happiness and achievement. But is our race capable of such an effort, such a complete reversal of its instinctive and traditional impulses? Can we find premonitions of any such bold and revolutionary adaptations as these, in the mental and political life of to-day? How far are we, reader and writer, for example, working for these large new securities? Do we even keep them steadfastly in our minds? How is it with the people around us? Are not we and they and all the race still just as much adrift in the current of circumstances as we were before 1914? Without a great effort on our part (or on someone's part) that current which swirled our kind into a sunshine of hope and opportunity for a while will carry our race on surely and inexorably to fresh wars, to shortages, hunger, miseries, and social debacles, at last either to complete extinction or to a degradation beyond our present understanding.

## § 2

The urgent need for a great creative effort has become apparent in the affairs of mankind. It is manifest that, unless some unity of purpose can be achieved in the world, unless the ever more violent and disastrous incidence of war can be averted, unless some common control can be imposed on the headlong waste of man's limited inheritance of coal, oil, and moral energy that is now going on, the history of humanity must presently culminate in some sort of disaster, repeating and exaggerating the disaster of the great war, producing chaotic social conditions, and going on thereafter in a degenerative process towards extinction. So much all reasonable men seem now prepared to admit. But upon the question of how and in what form a unity of purpose and a common control of human affairs is to be established, there is still a great and lamentable diversity of opinion and, as a consequence, an enfeeblement and wasteful dispersal of will. At present nothing has been produced but the manifestly quite inadequate League of Nations at Geneva, and a number of generally

very vague movements for a world law, world disarmament, and the like, among the intellectuals of the various civilised countries of the world

The common failings of all these initiatives are a sort of genteel timidity and a defective sense of the scale of the enterprise before us. A neglect of the importance of scale is one of the gravest faults of contemporary education. Because a world-wide political organ is needed, it does not follow that a so-called League of Nations without representative sanctions, military forces, or authority of any kind, a League from which large sections of the world are excluded altogether, is any contribution to that need. People have a way of saying it is better than nothing. But it may be worse than nothing. It may create a feeling of disillusionment about world-unifying efforts. If a mad elephant were loose in one's garden, it would be an excellent thing to give one's gardener a gun. But it would have to be an adequate gun, an elephant gun. To give him a small rook-rifle and tell him it was better than nothing, and encourage him to face the elephant with that in his hand, would be the directest way of getting rid not of the elephant, but of the gardener.

It is, if people will but think steadfastly, inconceivable that there should be any world control without a merger of sovereignty, but the framers of these early tentatives towards world unity have lacked the courage of frankness in this respect. They have been afraid of outbreaks of bawling patriotism, and they have tried to believe, and to make others believe, that they contemplate nothing more than a League of Nations, when in reality they contemplate a subordination of nations and administrations to one common law and rule. The elementary necessity of giving the council of any world-peace organisation which is to be more than a sentimental international gesture, not only a complete knowledge, but an effective control of all the military resources and organisations in the world, appalled them. They did not even ask for such a control. The crowning solidity of existing things was too much for them. They wanted to change them, but when it came to laying hands on them—No! They decided to leave them alone.

{ They wanted a new world—and it is to contain just the same things as the old

But are these intellectuals right in their estimate of the common man? Is he such a shallow and vehement fool as they seem to believe? Is he so patriotic as they make out? If mankind is to be saved from destruction there must be a world control, a world control means a world government, it is only another name for it, and manifestly that government must have a navy that will supersede the British navy, artillery that will supersede the French artillery, air forces superseding all existing air forces, and so forth. For many flags there must be one sovereign flag, *orbis terrarum*. Unless a world control amounts to that it will be ridiculous, just as a judge supported by two or three unarmed policemen, a newspaper reporter and the court chaplain proposing to enforce his decisions in a court packed with the heavily armed friends of the plaintiff and defendant would be ridiculous. But the common man is supposed to be so blindly and incurably set upon his British navy or his French army, or whatever his pet national instrument of violence may be, that it is held to be impossible to supersede these beloved and adored forces. If that is so, then a world law is impossible, and the wisest course before us is to snatch such small happiness as we may hope to do and leave the mad elephant to work its will in the garden.

{ But is it so? If the mass of common men are incurably patriotic and belligerent why is there a note of querulous exhortation in nearly all patriotic literature? Why, for instance, is Mr Rudyard Kipling's *History of England* so full of goadings and scoldings? And very significant indeed to any student of the human outlook was the world-response to President Wilson's advocacy of the League of Nations idea, in its first phase in 1918, before the weakening off and disillusionment of the Versailles Conference. Just for a little while it seemed that President Wilson stood for a new order of things in the world, that he had the wisdom and will and power to break the net of hatreds and nationalisms and diplomacies in which the Old World was entangled. And while he seemed to be capable of that,

while he promised most in the way of change and national control, then it was that he found his utmost support in every country in the world. In the latter half of 1918 there was scarcely a country anywhere in which one could not have found men ready to die for President Wilson. A great hopefulness was manifest in the world. It faded, it faded very rapidly again. But that brief wave of enthusiasm, which set minds astir with the same great idea of one peace of justice throughout the earth, in China and Bokhara and the Indian bazaars, in Iceland and Basutoland and Ireland and Morocco, was indeed a fact perhaps more memorable in history even than the Great War itself. (It displayed a possibility of the simultaneous operation of the same general ideas throughout the world quite beyond any previous experience. It demonstrated that the generality of men are as capable of being cosmopolitan and pacifist as they are of being patriotic and belligerent. (Both moods are extensions and exaltations beyond the everyday life, which itself is neither one thing nor the other. And both are transitory moods, responses to external suggestion.)

(It is to that first wave of popular feeling for a world law transcending and moving counter to all contemporary diplomacies, and not to the timid legalism of the framers of the first schemes for a League of Nations, that we must look if we are to hope at all for the establishment of a new order in human affairs.) It is upon the spirit of that transitory response to the transitory greatness of President Wilson that we have to seize, we have to lay hold of that, to recall it and confirm it and enlarge and strengthen it, to make it a flux of patriotisms and a creator of new loyalties and devotions, and out of the dead dust of our present institutions to build up for it and animate with it the body of a true world state.

We have already stated the clear necessity, if mankind is not to perish by the hypertrophy of warfare, for the establishment of an armed and strong world law. Here in this spirit that has already gleamed upon the world is the possible force to create and sustain such a world law. What is it that intervenes between the universal human

need and its satisfaction? Why, since there are overwhelming reasons for it and a widespread disposition for it, is there no world-wide creative effort afoot now in which men and women by the million are participating—and participating with all their hearts? Why is it that, except for the weak gestures of the Geneva League of Nations and a little writing of books and articles, a little pamphleteering, some scattered committee activities on the part of people chiefly of the busybody class, an occasional speech and a diminishing volume of talk and allusion, no attempts are apparent to stay the plain drift of human society towards new conflicts and the sluices of final disaster? *Why?*

The answer to that *Why*, probes deep into the question of human motives

It must be because we are all creatures of our immediate surroundings, because our minds and energies are chiefly occupied by the affairs of every day, because we are all chiefly living our own lives, and very few of us, except by a kind of unconscious contribution, the life of mankind. In moments of mental activity, in the study or in contemplation, we may rise to a sense of the dangers and needs of human destiny, but it is only a few minds and characters of prophetic quality that, without elaborate artificial assistance, seem able to keep hold upon and guide their lives by such relatively gigantic considerations. The generality of men and women, so far as their natural disposition goes, are scarcely more capable of apprehending and consciously serving the human future than a van full of well-fed rabbits would be of grasping the fact that their van was running smoothly and steadily down an inclined plane into the sea. It is only as the result of considerable educational effort and against considerable resistance that our minds are brought to a broader view. In every age for many thousands of years men of exceptional vision have spent their lives in passionate efforts to bring us ordinary men into some relation of response and service to the greater issues of life. It is these pioneers of vision who have given the world its religions and its philosophical cults, its loyalties and observances, and who have imposed ideas of greatness and duty on their fellows. In every age

the ordinary man has submitted reluctantly to such teachings, has made his peculiar compromises with them, has reduced them as far as possible to formula and formality, and got back as rapidly as possible to the eating and drinking and desire, the personal spites and rivalries and glories which constitute his reality. The mass of men to-day do not seem to care, nor want to care, whither the political and social institutions to which they are accustomed are taking them. Such considerations overstrain us. (And it is only by the extremest effort of those who are capable of a sense of racial danger and duty that the collective energies of men can ever be gathered together and organised and orientated towards the common good.) To nearly all men and women, unless they are in the ven for it, such discussion as this in these essays does not appeal as being right or wrong, it does not really interest them, rather it worries them, and for the most part they would be glad to disregard it as completely as a lecture on wheels and gravitation and the physiological consequences of prolonged submergence would be disregarded by those rabbits in the van.)

But man is a creature very different in his nature from a rabbit, and if he is less instinctively social, he is much more consciously social. Chief among his differences must be the presence of those tendencies which we call conscience, that haunting craving to be really right and to do the really right thing which is the basis of the moral and perhaps also of most of the religious life. In this lies our hope for mankind. Man hates to be put right, and yet also he wants to be right. He is a creature divided against himself, seeking both to preserve and to overcome his egotism. It is upon the presence of the latter strand in man's complex make-up that we must rest our hopes of a developing will for the world state which will gradually gather together and direct into a massive constructive effort the now quite dispersed chaotic and traditional activities of men.

As we have examined this problem it has become clear that the task of bringing about that consolidated world state which is necessary to prevent the decline and decay

of mankind is not primarily one for the diplomatists and lawyers and politicians at all. It is an educational one. It is a moral based on an intellectual reconstruction. The task immediately before mankind is to find release from the contentious loyalties and hostilities of the past which make collective world-wide action impossible at the present time, in a world-wide common vision of the history and destinies of the race. On that as a basis, and on that alone, can a world control be organised and maintained. The effort demanded from mankind, therefore, is primarily and essentially a bold reconstruction of the outlook upon life of hundreds of millions of minds. The idea of a world commonweal has to be established as the criterion of political institutions, and also as the criterion of general conduct in hundreds of millions of brains. It has to dominate education everywhere in the world. When that end is achieved, then the world state will be achieved, and it can be achieved in no other way. And unless that world state can be achieved, it would seem that the outlook before mankind is a continuance of disorder and of more and more destructive and wasteful conflicts, a steady process of violence, decadence, and misery towards extinction, or towards modifications of our type altogether beyond our present understanding and sympathy.

### § 3

In framing an estimate of the human future two leading facts are dominant. The first is the plain necessity for a political reorganisation of the world as a unity, to save our race from the social disintegration and complete physical destruction which war, under modern conditions, must ultimately entail, and the second is the manifest absence of any sufficient will in the general mass of mankind at the present time to make such a reorganisation possible. There appear to be the factors of such a will in men, but they are for the most part unawakened, or they are unorganised and ineffective. And there is a very curious incapacity to grasp the reality of the human situation, a real resistance to seeing things as they are—for man is an effort-shirking



animal—which greatly impedes the development of such a will. Failing the operation of such a sufficient will, human affairs are being directed by use and wont, by tradition and accidental deflections. Mankind, after the tragic concussion of the Great War, seems now to be drifting again towards new and probably more disastrous concussions.

The catastrophe of the Great War did more or less completely awaken a certain limited number of intelligent people to the need of some general control replacing this ancient traditional driftage of events. But they shrank from the great implications of such a world control. The only practicable way to achieve a general control in the face of existing governments, institutions, and prejudices, interested obstruction and the common disregard, is by extending this awakening to great masses of people. This means an unprecedented educational effort, an appeal to men's intelligence and men's imagination such as the world has never seen before. Is it possible to rationalise the at present chaotic will of mankind? That possibility, if it is a possibility, is the most important thing in contemporary human affairs.

We are asking here for an immense thing, for a change of ideas, a vast enlargement of ideas, and for something very like a change of heart in hundreds of millions of human beings. But then we are dealing with the fate of the entire species. We are discussing the prevention of wars, disorders, shortages, famines, and miseries for centuries ahead. The initial capital we have to go upon is as yet no more than the aroused understanding and conscience of a few thousands, at most of a few score thousands of people. Can so little a leaven leaven so great a lump? Is a response to this appeal latent in the masses of mankind? Is there anything in history to justify hope for so gigantic a mental turnover in our race? *St. Paul.*

A consideration of the spread of Christianity in the first four centuries A.D. or of the spread of Islam in the seventh century will, we believe, support a reasonable hope that such a change in the minds of men, whatever else it may be, is a practicable change, that it can be done and that it may even probably be done. Consider our two in 'various

The propagandas of those two great religions changed, and changed for ever, the political and social outlook over vast areas of the world's surface. Yet, while the star for world unity begins now simultaneously in many countries and many groups of people, those two propagandas each radiated from a single centre and were in the first instance the teachings of single individuals, and while to-day we can deal with great reading populations and can reach them by press and printed matter, by a universal distribution of books, by great lecturing organisations and the like, those earlier great changes in human thought were achieved mainly by word of mouth and by crabbed manuscripts, painfully copied and passed slowly from hand to hand. So far it is only the trader who has made any effectual use of the vast facilities the modern world has produced for conveying a statement simultaneously to great numbers of people at a distance. The world of thought still hesitates to use the means of power that now exist for it. History and political philosophy in the modern world are like bashful dons at a dinner-party, they crumble their bread and talk in undertones and clever allusions to their nearest neighbour, abashed at the thought of addressing the whole table. But in a world where Mars can reach out in a single night and smite a city a thousand miles away, we cannot suffer wisdom to hesitate in an inaudible gentility. The knowledge and vision that is good enough for the best of us is good enough for all. This gospel of human brotherhood and a common law and rule for all mankind, the attempt to meet this urgent necessity of a common control of human affairs, which indeed is no new religion, but only an attempt to realise practically the common teaching of all the established religions of the world, has to speak with dominating voice everywhere between the poles and round about the world.

And it must become part of the universal education. It must speak through the school and university. It is too often forgotten, in America, perhaps, even more than in Europe, that education exists for the community, and for the individual only so far as it makes him a sufficient member of the community. The chief end of education is

to subjugate and sublimate for the collective purposes of our land the savage egotism we inherit. Every school, every college, teaches directly, and still more by implication, relationship to a community and devotion to a community. In too many cases that community we let our schools and colleges teach to our children is an extremely narrow one, it is the community of a sect, of a class, or of an intolerant, greedy, and unrighteous nationalism. Schools have increased greatly in numbers throughout the world during the last century, but there has been little or no growth in the conception of education in schools. Education has been extended, but it has not been developed. If man is to be saved from self-destruction by the organisation of a world community, there must be a broadening of the reference of the teaching in the schools of all the world to that community of the world. World-wide educational development and reform are the necessary preparations for and the necessary accompaniments of a political reconstruction of the world. The two are the right and left hands of the same thing. Neither can effect much without the other.

Now it is manifest that this reorganisation of the world's affairs and of the world's education which we hold to be imperatively dictated by the change in warfare, communications, and other conditions of human life brought about by scientific discovery during the last hundred years, carries with it a practical repudiation of the claims of every existing sovereign government in the world to be final and sovereign, to be anything more than provisional and replaceable. There is the difficulty that has checked hundreds of men after their first step towards this work for a universal peace. It involves, it cannot but involve, a revision of their habitual allegiances. At best existing governments are to be regarded as local trustees and caretakers for the coming human commonwealth.

If they are not that, then they are necessarily obstructive and antagonistic. But few rulers, few governments, few officials, will have the greatness of mind to recognise and admit this plain reality. By a kind of necessity they force upon their subjects and public a conflict of loyalties.

The feeble driftage of human affairs from one base or greedy arrangement or cowardly evasion to another, since the Armistice of 1918, is very largely due to the obstinate determination of those who are in positions of authority and responsibility to ignore the plain teachings of the Great War and its sequelæ. They are resisting adjustments, their minds are fighting against the sacrifices of pride and authority that a full recognition of their subordination to the world commonweal will involve. They are prepared, it would seem, to fight against the work of human salvation basely and persistently, whenever their accustomed importance is threatened.

Even in the schools and in the world of thought the established thing will make its unrighteous fight for life. The dull and the dishonest in high places will suppress these greater ideas when they can, and ignore when they dare not suppress. It seems too much to hope for that there should be any willingness on the part of any established authority to admit its obsolescence and prepare the way for its merger in a world authority. It is not creative minds that produce revolutions, but the obstinate conservatism of established authority. It is the blank refusal to accept the idea of an orderly evolution towards new things that gives a revolutionary quality to every constructive proposal. The huge task of political and educational reconstruction which is needed to arrest the present drift of human affairs towards catastrophe, must be achieved, if it is to be achieved at all, mainly by voluntary and unofficial effort, and for the most part in the teeth of official opposition.

There are one or two existing states to which men have looked for some open recognition of their duty to mankind, as a whole, and of the necessarily provisional nature of their contemporary constitutions. The United States of America constitute a political system, profoundly different, in its origin and in its spirit, from any old-world state; it was felt that here at least might be an evolutionary state, and in the palmy days of President Wilson it did seem for a brief interval as if the New World was indeed coming to the rescue of the old, as if America was to play the rôle of

a propagandist continent, bringing its ideas of equality and freedom, and extending the spirit of its union to all the nations of the earth [From that expectation the world opinion is now in a state of excessive and unreasonable recoil] President Wilson fell away from his first intimations of that world-wide federal embrace; his mind and will were submerged by the clamour of contending patriotisms and the subtle expedients of old-world diplomacy in Paris, but American accessibility to the idea of a federalised world neither began with him nor will it end with his failure. America is still a hopeful laboratory of world-unifying thought. A long string of arbitration treaties stand to the credit of America, and a series of developing Pan-American projects, pointing clearly to at least a continental synthesis within a measurable time. There has been, and there still is, a better understanding of, and a greater receptivity to, ideas of international synthesis in America than in any European state.

And the British Empire, which according to many of its liberal apologists is already a league of nations linked together in a mutually advantageous peace, to that, too, men have looked for some movement of adaptation to this greater synthesis which is the world's pre-eminent need. But so far the British Empire has failed to respond to such expectations. The war has left it strained and bruised, and with its affairs very much in the grip of the military class, the most illiterate and dangerous class in the community. They have done, perhaps, irreparable mischief to the peace of the empire in Ireland, India and Egypt, and they have made the claim of the British system to be an exemplary unification of dissimilar peoples seem now to many people incurably absurd. It is a great misfortune for mankind that the British Empire, which played so sturdy and central a part in the Great War, could at its close achieve no splendid and helpful gesture towards a generous reconstruction.

Since the armistice there has been an extraordinary opportunity for the British monarchy to have displayed a sense of the new occasions before the world, and to have led the way towards the efforts and renunciations of an



## § 4

In the three preceding essays an attempt has been made to state the pass at which mankind has arrived, the dangers and mischiefs that threaten our race, and the need there is and the opportunities there are for a strenuous attempt to end the age-long bickerings of nations and empires and establish one community of law and effort throughout the whole world. Stress has been laid chiefly upon the monstrous evils and disasters a continuation of our present divisions, our nationalisms and imperialisms and the like, will certainly entail. These considerations of evil, however, are only the negative argument for this creative effort, they have been thrust forward because war, disorder, insufficiency, and the ill health, the partings, deprivations, boredom, and unhappiness that arise out of these things are well within our experience and entirely credible, the positive argument for a world order demands at once more faith and imagination.

Given a world law and world security, a release from the net of bickering frontiers, world-wide freedom of movement, and world-wide fellowship, a thousand good things that are now beyond hope or dreaming would come into the ordinary life. The whole world would be our habitation, and the energies of men, released from their preoccupation with contention, would go more and more abundantly into the accumulation and application of scientific knowledge, that is to say into the increase of mental and bodily health, of human power, of interest and happiness. Even to day the most delightful possibilities stand waiting, inaccessible to nearly all of us because of the general insecurity, distrust, and anger. Flying, in a world safely united in peace, could take us now to the ends of the earth smoothly, securely through the sweet upper air, in five or six days. In two or three years there could again be abundance of food and pleasant clothing for everyone throughout the whole world. Men could be destroying their slums and pestilential habitations and rebuilding spacious and beautiful cities. Given only peace and confidence and union we

could double our yearly production of all that makes life desirable and still double our leisure for thought and growth. We could live in a universal palace and make the whole globe our garden and playground

But these are not considerations that sway people to effort. Fear and hate, not hope and desire, have been hitherto the effective spurs for men. The most popular religions are those which hold out the widest hopes of damnation. Our lives are lives of use and wont, we distrust the promise of delightful experience and achievements beyond our accustomed ways, it offends our self-satisfaction even to regard them as possibilities, we do not like the implied cheapening of familiar things. We are all ready to sneer at "Utopias," as elderly invalids sneer at the buoyant hopes of youth and do their best to think them sure of frustration. The aged and disillusioned profess a keen appreciation of the bath chair and the homely spoonful of medicine, and pity a crudity that misses the fine quality of those ripe established things. Most people are quite ready to dismiss the promise of a full free life for all mankind with a sneer. That would rob the world of romance, they say, the romance of passport offices, custom houses, shortages of food, endless petty deprivations, slums, pestilence, under-educated stunted children, youths dying in heaps in muddy trenches, an almost universal lack of vitality, and all the picturesque eventfulness of contemporary conditions. So that we have not dwelt here upon the life-giving aspect of a possible world state, but only on its life-saving aspects. We have not argued that our present life of use and wont could be replaced by an infinitely better way of living. We have rather pointed out that if things continue to drift as they are doing, the present life of use and wont will become intolerably insecure. It is the thought of the large bombing aeroplane and not the hope of swift travelling across the sky that will move the generality of men, if they are to be moved at all, towards a world peace.

But whether the lever that moves them is desire or fear, the majority of men, unless the species is to perish, must be brought within a measurable time to an understanding



of, and a will for, a single world government. And since at first existing institutions, established traditions, educational organisations and the like, will all be passively if not actively resistant to the spread of this saving idea, and much more so to any attempts to realise this saving idea, there remains nothing for us to look to, at the present time, for the first organisation of this immense effort of mental reversal, but the zeal and devotion and self-sacrifice of convinced individuals. The world state must begin, it can only begin as a propagandist cult, or as a group of propagandist cults, to which men and women must give themselves and their energies, regardless of the consequences to themselves. Laying the foundations of a world state upon a site already occupied by a muddle of buildings is an undertaking which will almost necessarily bring its votaries into conflict with established authority and current sentiment, they will have to face the possibility of lives of conflict, misunderstanding, much thankless exertion, they must count on little honour and considerable active dislike, and they will have to find what consolation they can in the interest of the conflict itself and in the thought of a world made at last, by such efforts as theirs, peaceful and secure and vigorous, a world they can never hope to see. So stated it seems a bad bargain that the worker for the world state is invited to make, yet the world has never lacked people prepared to make such a bargain, and they will not fail it now. There are worse things than conflict without manifest victory and effort without apparent reward. To the finer kind of mind it is infinitely more tragic and distressing to find that existence bears a foolish, aimless face. Many people, tormented by the discontent of conscience, and wanting, more than they can ever want any satisfaction, some satisfying rule of life, some criterion of conduct, will find in this cult of the world state just that sustaining reality they need. (And their number will grow. Because it is a practical and reasonable shape for a life, arising naturally out of a proper understanding of history and physical science, and embodying in a unifying plan the teaching of all the great religions of the world. It comes to us not to destroy, but to fulfil.)

The activities of a cult which set itself to bring about the world state would at first be propagandist, they would be intellectual and educational, and only as a sufficient mass of opinion and will had accumulated would they become to a predominant extent politically constructive. Such a cult must direct itself particularly to the teaching of the young. So far the propaganda for a world law, the League of Nations propaganda, since it has sought immediate political results, has been addressed almost entirely to adults, and as a consequence it has had to adapt itself as far as possible to their preconceptions about the history and outlook of their own nationality, and to the general absence as yet in the world of any vision of the welfare of mankind as one whole. It is because of this acceptance of current adult ideas about patriotism and nationality that the movement has adopted the unsatisfactory phrase, a League of Nations, when what is contemplated is much more than a league and a very considerable subordination of national sovereignty. And a large share in the current ineffectiveness of the League of Nations is evidently due to the fact that men interpret the phrase and the proposition of the League of Nations differently in accordance with the different fundamental historical ideas they possess, ideas that propaganda has hitherto left unassailed. The worker for the world state will look further and plough deeper. It is these fundamental ideas which are the vitally important objective of a world-unifying movement, and they can only be brought into that world-wide uniformity which is essential to the enduring peace of mankind, by teaching children throughout all the earth the common history of their kind, and so directing their attention to the common future of their descendants. The driving force that makes either war or peace is engendered where the young are taught. The teacher, whether mother, priest, or schoolmaster, is the real maker of history, rulers, statesmen, and soldiers do but work out the possibilities of co-operation or conflict, the teacher creates. This is no rhetorical flourish, it is a sober fact. The politicians and masses of our time dance on the wires of their early education.

Teaching then is the initial and decisive factor in the future of mankind, and the first duty of everyone who has the ability and opportunity, is to teach, or to subserve the teaching of, the true history of mankind and of the possibilities of this vision of a single world state that history opens out to us. Men and women can help the spread of the saving doctrine in a thousand various ways, for it is not only in homes and schools that minds are shaped. They can print and publish books, endow schools and teaching, organise the distribution of literature, insist upon the proper instruction of children in world-wide charity and fellowship, fight against every sort of suppression or restrictive control of right education, bring pressure through political and social channels upon every teaching organisation to teach history aright, sustain missions and a new sort of missionary, the missionaries to all mankind of knowledge and the idea of one world civilisation and one world community, they can promote and help the progress of historical and ethnological and political science, they can set their faces against every campaign of hate, racial suspicion, and patriotic falsehood, they can refuse, they are bound to refuse, obedience to any public authority which oppresses and embitters class against class, race against race, and people against people. A belligerent government, as such, they can refuse to obey, and they can refuse to help or suffer any military preparations that are not directed wholly and plainly to preserving the peace of the world. This is the plain duty of every honest man to-day, to judge his magistrate before he obeys him, and to render unto Cæsar nothing that he owes to God and mankind. And those who are awakened to the full significance of the vast creative effort now before mankind will set themselves particularly to revise the common moral judgment upon many acts and methods of living that obstruct the way of the world state. Blatant, aggressive patriotism, and the incitements against foreign peoples that usually go with it, are just as criminal and far more injurious to our race than, for example, indecent provocations and open incitements to sexual vice, they produce a much beastlier and crueller state of mind, and they deserve at least an equal

condemnation. Yet you will find even priests and clergymen to-day rousing the war passions of their flocks and preaching conflict from the very steps of the altar

So far the movement towards a world state has lacked any driving power of passion. We have been passing through a phase of intellectual revision. The idea of a world unity and brotherhood has come back again into the world almost apologetically, deferentially, asking for the kind words of successful politicians and for a gesture of patronage from kings. Yet this demand for one world empire of righteousness was inherent in the teachings of Buddha, it flashed for a little while behind the sword of Islam, it is the embodiment in earthly affairs of the spirit of Christ. It is a call to men for service as of right, it is not an appeal to them that they may refuse, nor a voice that they may disregard. It is too great a thing to hover for long thus deferentially on the outskirts of the active world it has come to save. To-day the world state says, "Please listen, make way for me." To-morrow it will say, "Make way for me, little people." The day is not remote when disregardful "patriotic" men hectoring in the crowd will be twisted round perforce to the light they refuse to see. First comes the idea and then slowly the full comprehension of the idea, comes realisation, and with that realisation will come a kindling anger at the vulgarity, the meanness, the greed and baseness and utter stupidity that refuses to attend to this clear voice, this definite demand of our racial necessity. To-day we teach, but as understanding grows we must begin to act. We must put ourselves and our rulers and our fellow-men on trial. We must ask, "What have you done, what are you doing to help or hinder the peace and order of mankind?" A time will come when a politician who has wilfully made war and promoted international dissension will be as sure of the dock and much surer of the noose than a private homicide. It is not reasonable that those who gamble with men's lives should not stake their own. The service of the world state calls for much more than passive resistance to belligerent authorities, for much more than exemplary martyrdoms. It calls for the greater effort of active

interference with mischievous men "I will believe in the League of Nations," one man has written, "when men will fight for it" For this League of Nations at Geneva, this little corner of Balfourian jobs and gentility, no man would dream of fighting, but for the great state of mankind, men will presently be very ready to fight and, as the thing may go, either to kill or die Things must come in their order, first the idea, then the kindling of imaginations, then the world-wide battle We who live in the bleak days after a great crisis, need be no more discouraged by the apparent indifference of the present time than are fields that are ploughed and sown by the wet days of February and the cold indifference of the winds of early March The ploughing has been done, and the seed is in the ground, and the world stirs in a multitude of germinating minds

## VIII

### BOOKS WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED ME

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

THE editor has somewhat insidiously laid a trap for his correspondents, the question put appearing at first so innocent, truly cutting so deep (It is not, indeed, until after some reconnaissance and review that the writer awakes to find himself engaged upon something in the nature of autobiography, or, perhaps worse, upon a chapter in the life of that little, beautiful brother whom we once all had, and whom we have all lost and mourned, the man we ought to have been, the man we hoped to be) But when word has been passed (even to an editor), it should, if possible, be kept, and if sometimes I am wise and say too little, and sometimes yreak and say too much, the blame must lie at the door of the person who entrapped me

The most influential books, and the truest in their influence, are works of fiction. They do not pin the reader to a dogma, which he must afterwards discover to be inexact; they do not teach him a lesson, which he must afterwards unlearn. They repeat, they rearrange, they clarify the lessons of life, they disengage us from ourselves, they constrain us to the acquaintance of others, and they show us the web of experience, not as we can see it for ourselves, but with a singular change—that monstrous, consuming ego of ours being, for the nonce, struck out. To be so, they must be reasonably true to the human comedy, and any work that is so serves the turn of instruction. But the course of our education is answered best by those poems and romances where we breathe a magnanimous atmosphere of thought and meet generous and pious characters. Shakespeare has served me best. Few living friends have had

upon me an influence so strong for good as Hamlet or Rosalind. The last character, already well beloved in the reading, I had the good fortune to see, I must think, in an impressible hour, played by Mrs Scott Siddons. Nothing has ever more moved, more delighted, more refreshed me; nor has the influence quite passed away. Kent's brief speech over the dying Lear had a great effect upon my mind, and was the burthen of my reflections for long, so profoundly, so touchingly generous did it appear in sense, so overpowering in expression. Perhaps my dearest and best friend outside of Shakespeare is D'Artagnan—the elderly D'Artagnan of the *Vicomte de Bragelonne*. I know not a more human soul, nor, in his way, a finer, I shall be very sorry for the man who is so much of a pedant in morals that he cannot learn from the Captain of Musketeers. Lastly, I must name the *Pilgrim's Progress*, a book that breathes of every beautiful and valuable emotion.

But of works of art little can be said, their influence is profound and silent, like the influence of nature, they mould by contact, we drink them up like water, and are bettered, yet know not how. It is in books more specifically didactic that we can follow out the effect, and distinguish and weigh and compare. A book which has been very influential upon me fell early into my hands, and so may stand first, though I think its influence was only sensible later on, and perhaps still keeps growing, for it is a book not easily outlived the *Essais* of Montaigne. (That temperate and genial picture of life is a great gift to place in the hands of persons of to-day, they will find in these smiling pages a magazine of heroism and wisdom, all of an antique strain, they will have their "linen decencies" and excited orthodoxies fluttered, and will (if they have any gift of reading) perceive that these have not been fluttered without some excuse and ground of reason, and (again if they have any gift of reading) they will end by seeing that this old gentleman was in a dozen ways a finer fellow, and held in a dozen ways a nobler view of life, than they or their contemporaries.)

The next book, in order of time, to influence me, was the

New Testament, and in particular the Gospel according to St Matthew I believe it would startle and move anyone if they could make a certain effort of imagination and read it freshly like a book, not droningly and dully like a portion of the Bible Anyone would then be able to see in it those truths which we are all courteously supposed to know and all modestly refrain from applying But upon this subject it is perhaps better to be silent

I come next to Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, a book of singular service, a book which tumbled the world upside down for me, blew into space a thousand cobwebs of genteel and ethical illusion, and, having thus shaken my tabernacle of lies, set me back again upon a strong foundation of all the original and manly virtues But it is, once more, only a book for those who have the gift of reading I will be very frank—I believe it is so with all good books except, perhaps, fiction (The average man lives, and must live, so wholly in convention, that gunpowder charges of the truth are more apt to discompose than to invigorate his creed) (Either he cries out upon blasphemy and indecency, and crouches the closer round that little idol of part-truths and part-conveniences which is the contemporary deity, or he is convinced by what is new, forgets what is old, and becomes truly blasphemous and indecent himself) New truth is only useful to supplement the old, rough truth is only wanted to expand, not to destroy, our civil and often elegant conventions He who cannot judge had better stick to fiction and the daily papers There he will get little harm, and, in the first at least, some good

Close upon the back of my discovery of Whitman, I came under the influence of Herbert Spencer No more persuasive rabbi exists, and few better How much of his vast structure will bear the touch of time, how much is clay and how much brass, it were too curious to inquire But his words, if dry, are always manly and honest, there dwells in his pages a spirit of highly abstract joy, plucked naked like an algebraic symbol but still joyful and the reader will find there a *caput mortuum* of piety, with little indeed of its loveliness, but with most of its essentials, and these two qualities make him a wholesome, as his intellectual vigour



makes him a bracing, writer I should be much of a hound if I lost my gratitude to Herbert Spencer

*Goethe's Life*, by Lewes, had a great importance for me when it first fell into my hands—a strange instance of the partiality of man's good and man's evil I know no one whom I less admire than Goethe, he seems a very epitome of the sins of genius, breaking open the doors of private life, and wantonly wounding friends, in that crowning offence of *Werther*, and in his own character a mere pen-and-ink Napoleon, conscious of the rights and duties of superior talents as a Spanish inquisitor was conscious of the rights and duties of his office And yet in his fine devotion to his art, in his honest and serviceable friendship for Schiller, what lessons are contained! (*Biography, usually so false to its office*, does here for once perform for us some of the work of fiction, reminding us, that is, of the truly mingled tissue of man's nature, and how huge faults and shining virtues cohabit and persevere in the same character) History serves us well to this effect, but in the originals, not in the pages of the popular epitomiser, (who is bound, by the very nature of his task, to make us feel the difference of epochs instead of the essential identity of man) and even in the originals only to those who can recognise their own human virtues and defects in strange forms, often inverted and under strange names, often interchanged) Martial is a poet of no good repute, and it gives a man new thoughts to read his works dispassionately, and find in this unseemly jester's serious passages the image of a kind, wise, and self-respecting gentleman It is customary, I suppose, in reading Martial, to leave out these pleasant verses, I never heard of them, at least, until I found them for myself, and this partiality is one among a thousand things that help to build up our distorted and hysterical conception of the great Roman Empire

This brings us by a natural transition to a very noble book—the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius The dispassionate gravity, the noble forgetfulness of self, the tenderness of others, that are there expressed and were practised on so great a scale in the life of its writer, make this book a book quite by itself No one can read it and not be

moved Yet it scarcely or rarely appeals to the feelings—those very mobile, those not very trusty parts of man Its address lies further back. / its lesson comes more deeply home, when you have read, you carry away with you a memory of the man himself, it is as though you had touched a loyal hand, looked into brave eyes, and made a noble friend; there is another bond on you thenceforward, binding you to life and to the love of virtue

Wordsworth should perhaps come next Everyone has been influenced by Wordsworth, and it is hard to tell precisely how A certain innocence, a rugged austerity of joy, a sight of the stars, "the silence that is in the lonely hills," something of the cold thrill of dawn, cling to his work and give it a particular address to what is best in us I do not know that you learn a lesson, you need not—Mill did not—agree with any one of his beliefs, and yet the spell is cast (Such are the best teachers, a dogma learned is only a new error—the old one was perhaps as good, but a spirit communicated is a perpetual possession These best teachers climb beyond teaching to the plane of art, it is themselves, and what is best in themselves, that they communicate)

I should never forgive myself if I forgot *The Egoist* It is art, if you like, but it belongs purely to didactic art, and from all the novels I have read (and I have read thousands) stands in a place by itself (Here is a Nathan for the modern David) here is a book to send the blood into men's faces Satire, the angry picture of human faults, is not great art, we can all be angry with our neighbour, what we want is to be shown, not his defects, of which we are too conscious, but his merits, to which we are too blind And *The Egoist* is a satire, so much must be allowed, but it is a satire of a singular quality, which tells you nothing of that obvious mote, which is engaged from first to last with that invisible beam It is yourself that is hunted down, these are your own faults that are dragged into the day and numbered, with lingering relish, with cruel cunning and precision A young friend of Mr Meredith's (as I have the story) came to him in an agony "This is too bad of you," he cried "Willoughby is me!" "No, my dear fellow," said the

author, "he is all of us" I have read *The Egoist* five or six times myself, and I mean to read it again, for I am like the young friend of the anecdote—I think Willoughby an unmanly but a very serviceable exposure of myself

I suppose, when I am done, I shall find that I have forgotten much that was most influential, as I see already I have forgotten Thoreau, and Hazlitt, whose paper "On the Spirit of Obligations" was a turning-point in my life, and Penn, whose little book of aphorisms had a brief but strong effect on me, and Mitford's *Tales of Old Japan*, wherein I learned for the first time the proper attitude of any rational man to his country's laws—a secret found, and kept, in the Asiatic islands That I should commemorate all is more than I can hope or the editor could ask It will be more to the point, after having said so much upon improving books, to say a word or two about the improvable reader The gift of reading, as I have called it, is not very common, nor very generally understood It consists, first of all, in a vast intellectual endowment—a free grace, I find I must call it—by which a man rises to understand that he is not punctually right, nor those from whom he differs absolutely wrong He may hold dogmas, he may hold them passionately, and he may know that others hold them but coldly, or hold them differently, or hold them not at all Well, if he has the gift of reading, these others will be full of meat for him They will see the other side of propositions and the other side of virtues He need not change his dogma for that, but he may change his reading of that dogma, and he must supplement and correct his deductions from it { A human truth, which is always very much a lie, hides as much of life as it displays It is men who hold another truth, or, as it seems to us, perhaps, a dangerous lie, who can extend our restricted field of knowledge, and rouse our drowsy consciences Something that seems quite new, or that seems insolently false or very dangerous, is the test of a reader If he tries to see what it means, what truth excuses it, he has the gift, and let him read If he is merely hurt, or offended, or exclaims upon his author's folly, he had better take to the daily papers; he will never be a reader. }

And here, with the aptest illustrative force, after I have laid down my part-truth, I must step in with its opposite. For, after all, we are vessels of a very limited content. Not all men can read all books, it is only in a chosen few that any man will find his appointed food, and the fittest lessons are the most palatable, and make themselves welcome to the mind. A writer learns this early, and it is his chief support, he goes on unafraid, laying down the law; and he is sure at heart that most of what he says is demonstrably false, and much of a mingled strain, and some hurtful, and very little good for service, but he is sure besides that when his words fall into the hands of any genuine reader, they will be weighed and winnowed, and only that which suits will be assimilated, and when they fall into the hands of one who cannot intelligently read, they come there quite silent and inarticulate, falling upon deaf ears, and his secret is kept as if he had not written.

## IX

### AN AUTUMN EFFECT

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

"Nous ne décrivons jamais mieux la nature que lorsque nous nous efforçons d'exprimer sobrement et simplement l'impression que nous en avons reçue"—M. ANDRÉ THEURIET, "*L'Automne dans les Bois*," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st Oct 1874, p. 562<sup>1</sup>

A COUNTRY rapidly passed through under favourable auspices may leave upon us a unity of impression that would only be disturbed and dissipated if we stayed longer. Clear vision goes with the quick foot. Things fall for us into a sort of natural perspective when we see them for a moment in going by, we generalise boldly and simply, and are gone before the sun is overcast, before the rain falls, before the season can steal like a dial-hand from his figure, before the lights and shadows, shifting round towards nightfall, can show us the other side of things, and believe what they showed us in the morning. We expose our mind to the landscape (as we would expose the prepared plate in the camera) for the moment only during which the effect endures, and we are away before the effect can change. Hence we shall have in our memories a long scroll of continuous wayside pictures, all imbued already with the prevailing sentiment of the season, the weather, and the landscape, and certain to be unified more and more, as time goes on, by the unconscious processes of thought. So that we who have only looked at a country

<sup>1</sup> I had nearly finished the transcription of the following pages, when I saw on a friend's table the number containing the piece from which this sentence is extracted, and, struck with a similarity of style, took it home with me and read it with indescribable satisfaction. I do not know whether I more envy M. Theuriot the pleasure of having written this delightful article, or the reader the pleasure, which I hope he has still before him, of reading it once and again, and lingering over the passages that please him most.

over our shoulder, so to speak, as we went by, will have a conception of it far more memorable and articulate than a man who has lived there all his life from a child upwards, and had his impression of to-day modified by that of to-morrow, and belied by that of the day after, till at length the stable characteristics of the country are all blotted out from him behind the confusion of variable effect

I began my little pilgrimage in the most enviable of all humours that in which a person, with a sufficiency of money and a knapsack, turns his back on a town and walks forward into a country of which he knows only by the vague report of others. Such an one has not surrendered his will and contracted for the next hundred miles, like a man on a railway. He may change his mind at every finger-post, and, where ways meet, follow vague preferences freely and go the low road or the high, choose the shadow or the sunshine, suffer himself to be tempted by the lane that turns immediately into the woods, or the broad road that lies open before him into the distance, and shows him the far-off spires of some city, or a range of mountain-tops, or a rim of sea, perhaps, along a low horizon. In short, he may gratify his every whim and fancy, without a pang of reproving conscience, or the least jostle to his self-respect. It is true, however, that most men do not possess the faculty of free action, the priceless gift of being able to live for the moment only; and as they begin to go forward on their journey, they will find that they have made for themselves new fetters. Slight projects they may have entertained for a moment, half in jest, become iron laws to them, they know not why. They will be led by the nose by these vague reports of which I spoke above, and the mere fact that their informant mentioned one village and not another will compel their footsteps with inexplicable power. And yet a little while, yet a few days of this fictitious liberty, and they will begin to hear imperious voices calling on them to return, and some passion, some duty, some worthy or unworthy expectation, will set its hand upon their shoulder and lead them back into the old paths. Once and again we have all made the

experiment We know the end of it right well And yet if we make it for the hundredth time to-morrow, it will have the same charm as ever, our heart will beat and our eyes will be bright, as we leave the town behind us, and we shall feel once again (as we have felt so often before) that we are cutting ourselves loose for ever from our whole past life, with all its sins and follies and circumscriptions, and go forward as a new creature into a new world

It was well, perhaps, that I had this first enthusiasm to encourage me up the long hill above High Wycombe; for the day was a bad day for walking at best, and now began to draw towards afternoon, dull, heavy, and lifeless A pall of grey cloud covered the sky, and its colour reacted on the colour of the landscape Near at hand, indeed, the hedgerow trees were still fairly green, shot through with bright autumnal yellows, bright as sunshine But a little way off, the solid bricks of woodland that lay squarely on slope and hill-top were not green, but russet and grey, and ever less russet and more grey as they drew off into the distance As they drew off into the distance, also, the woods seemed to mass themselves together, and lie thin and straight, like clouds, upon the limit of one's view Not that this massing was complete, or gave the idea of any extent of forest, for every here and there the trees would break up and go down into a valley in open order, or stand in long Indian file along the horizon, tree after tree relieved, foolishly enough, against the sky I say foolishly enough, although I have seen the effect employed cleverly in art, and such long line of single trees thrown out against the customary sunset of a Japanese picture with a certain fantastic effect that was not to be despised, but this was over water and level land, where it did not jar, as here, with the soft contour of hills and valleys The whole scene had an indefinable look of being painted, the colour was so abstract and correct, and there was something so sketchy and merely impressional about these distant single trees on the horizon that one was forced to think of it all as of a clever French landscape. (For it is rather in nature that we see resemblance to art, than in art to nature, and we say a hundred times, "How like a

picture!" for once that we say, "How like the truth!" The forms in which we learn to think of landscape are forms that we have got from painted canvas. Any man can see and understand a picture, it is reserved for the few to separate anything out of the confusion of nature, and see that distinctly and with intelligence.

The sun came out before I had been long on my way, and as I had got by that time to the top of the ascent, and was now treading a labyrinth of confined by-roads, my whole view brightened considerably in colour, for it was the distance only that was grey and cold, and the distance I could see no longer. Overhead there was a wonderful carolling of larks which seemed to follow me as I went. Indeed, during all the time I was in that country the larks did not desert me. The air was alive with them from High Wycombe to Tring, and as, day after day, their "shrill delight" fell upon me out of the vacant sky, they began to take such a prominence over other conditions, and form so integral a part of my conception of the country, that I could have baptised it "The Country of Larks." This, of course, might just as well have been in early spring, but everything else was deeply imbued with the sentiment of the later year. There was no stir of insects in the grass. The sunshine was more golden, and gave less heat than summer sunshine, and the shadows under the hedge were somewhat blue and misty. It was only in autumn that you could have seen the mingled green and yellow of the elm foliage, and the fallen leaves that lay about the road, and covered the surface of wayside pools so thickly that the sun was reflected only here and there from little joints and pin-holes in that brown coat of proof, or that your ear would have been troubled, as you went forward, by the occasional report of fowling-pieces from all directions and all degrees of distance.

For a long time this dropping fire was the one sign of human activity that came to disturb me as I walked. The lanes were profoundly still. They would have been sad but for the sunshine and the singing of the larks. And as it was, there came over me at times a feeling of isolation that was not disagreeable, and yet was enough to make



me quicken my steps eagerly when I saw someone before me on the road. This fellow-voyager proved to be no less a person than the parish constable. It had occurred to me that in a district which was so little populous and so well wooded, a criminal of any intelligence might play hide-and-seek with the authorities for months, and this idea was strengthened by the aspect of the portly constable as he walked by my side with deliberate dignity and turned-out toes. But a few minutes' converse set my heart at rest. These rural criminals are very tame birds, it appeared. If my informant did not immediately lay his hand on an offender, he was content to wait, some evening after nightfall there would come a tap at his door, and the outlaw, weary of outlawry, would give himself quietly up to undergo sentence, and resume his position in the life of the country-side. Married men caused him no disquietude whatever, he had them fast by the foot. Sooner or later they would come back to see their wives, a peeping neighbour would pass the word, and my portly constable would walk quietly over and take the bird sitting. And if there were a few who had no particular ties in the neighbourhood, and preferred to shift into another county when they fell into trouble, their departure moved the placid constable in no degree. He was of Dogberry's opinion, and if a man would not stand in the Prince's name, he took no note of him, but let him go, and thanked God he was rid of a knave. And surely the crime and the law were in admirable keeping, rustic constable was well met with rustic offender. The officer sitting at home over a bit of fire until the criminal came to visit him, and the criminal coming—it was a fair match. One felt as if this must have been the order in that delightful seaboard Bohemia where Florizel and Perdita courted in such sweet accents, and the Puritan sang Psalms to hornpipes, and the four-and-twenty shearers danced with nosegays in their bosoms, and chanted their three songs apiece at the old shepherd's festival, and one could not help picturing to oneself what havoc among good people's purses, and tribulation for benignant constables, might be worked here by the arrival, over stile and footpath, of a new Autolycus.

Bidding good-morning to my fellow-traveller, I left the road and struck across country. It was rather a revelation to pass from between the hedgerows and find quite a bustle on the other side, a great coming and going of school-children upon by-paths, and, in every second field, lusty horses and stout country-folk a-ploughing. The way I followed took me through many fields thus occupied, and through many strips of plantation, and then over a little space of smooth turf, very pleasant to the feet, set with tall fir-trees and clamorous with rooks making ready for the winter, and so back again into the quiet road. I was now not far from the end of my day's journey. A few hundred yards farther, and, passing through a gap in the hedge, I began to go down hill through a pretty extensive tract of young beeches. I was soon in shadow myself, but the afternoon sun still coloured the upmost boughs of the wood, and made a fire over my head in the autumnal foliage. A little faint vapour lay among the slim tree stems in the bottom of the hollow, and from farther up I heard from time to time an outburst of gross laughter, as though clowns were making merry in the bush. (There was something about the atmosphere that brought all sights and sounds home to one with a singular purity, so that I felt as if my senses had been washed with water.) After I had crossed the little zone of mist, the path began to remount the hill; and just as I, mounting along with it, had got back again, from the head downwards, into the thin golden sunshine, I saw in front of me a donkey tied to a tree. Now, I have a certain liking for donkeys, principally, I believe, because of the delightful things that Sterne has written of them. But this was not after the pattern of the ass at Lyons. He was of a white colour, that seemed to fit him rather for rare festal occasions than for constant drudgery. Besides, he was very small, and of the daintiest proportions you can imagine in a donkey. And so, sure enough, you had only to look at him to see he had never worked. There was something too roguish and wanton in his face, a look too like that of a schoolboy or a street Arab, to have survived much cudgelling. It was plain that these feet had kicked off sportive children oftener

than they had plodded with a freight through miry lanes. He was altogether a fine-weather, holiday sort of donkey, and though he was just then somewhat solemnised and rueful, he still gave proof of the levity of his disposition by impudently wagging his ears at me as I drew near. I say he was somewhat solemnised just then, for, with the admirable instinct of all men and animals under restraint, he had so wound and wound the halter about the tree that he could go neither back nor forwards, nor so much as put down his head to browse. There he stood, poor rogue, part puzzled, part angry, part, I believe, amused. He had not given up hope, and dully revolved the problem in his head, giving ever and again another jerk at the few inches of free rope that still remained unwound. A humorous sort of sympathy for the creature took hold upon me. I went up, and, not without some trouble on my part, and much distrust and resistance on the part of Neddy, got him forced backwards until the whole length of the halter was set loose, and he was once more as free a donkey as I dared to make him. I was pleased (as people are) with this friendly action to a fellow-creature in tribulation, and glanced back over my shoulder to see how he was profiting by his freedom. The brute was looking after me, and no sooner did he catch my eye than he put up his long white face into the air, pulled an impudent mouth at me, and began to bray derisively. If ever one person made a grimace at another, that donkey made a grimace at me. The hardened ingratitude of his behaviour, and the impertinence that inspired his whole face as he curled up his lip, and showed his teeth, and began to bray, so tickled me, and was so much in keeping with what I had imagined to myself about his character, that I could not find it in my heart to be angry, and burst into a peal of hearty laughter. This seemed to strike the ass as a repartee, so he brayed at me again by way of rejoinder, and we went on for a while, braying and laughing, until I began to grow weary of it, and, shouting a derisive farewell, turned to pursue my way. In so doing—it was like going suddenly into cold water—I found myself face to face with a prim little old maid. She was all in a flutter, the poor old dear!

She had concluded beyond question that this must be a lunatic who stood laughing aloud at a white donkey in the placid beech-woods. I was sure, by her face, that she had already recommended her spirit most religiously to Heaven, and prepared herself for the worst. And so, to reassure her, I uncovered and besought her, after a very staid fashion, to put me on my way to Great Missenden. Her voice trembled a little, to be sure, but I think her mind was set at rest, and she told me, very explicitly, to follow the path until I came to the end of the wood, and then I should see the village below me in the bottom of the valley. And, with mutual courtesies, the little old maid and I went on our respective ways.

Nor had she misled me. Great Missenden was close at hand, as she had said, in the trough of a gentle valley, with many great elms about it. The smoke from its chimneys went up pleasantly in the afternoon sunshine. The sleepy hum of a threshing-machine filled the neighbouring fields and hung about the quaint street corners. A little above, the church sits well back on its haunches against the hill-side—an attitude for a church, you know, that makes it look as if it could be ever so much higher if it liked, and the trees grew about it thickly, so as to make a density of shade in the churchyard. A very quiet place it looks, and yet I saw many boards and posters about threatening dire punishment against those who broke the church windows or defaced the precinct, and offering rewards for the apprehension of those who had done the like already. It was fair day in Great Missenden. There were three stalls set up, *sub jove*, for the sale of pastry and cheap toys, and a great number of holiday children thronged about the stalls and noisily invaded every corner of the straggling village. They came round me by coveys, blowing simultaneously upon penny trumpets as though they imagined I should fall to pieces like the battlements of Jericho. I noticed one among them who could make a wheel of himself like a London boy, and seemingly enjoyed a grave pre-eminence upon the strength of the accomplishment. By and by, however, the trumpets began to weary me, and I went indoors, leaving the fair, I fancy, at its height.

Night had fallen before I ventured forth again. It was pitch-dark in the village street, and the darkness seemed only the greater for a light here and there in an uncurtained window or from an open door. Into one such window I was rude enough to peep, and saw within a charming *genre* picture. In a room, all white wainscot and crimson wall-paper, a perfect gem of colour after the black, empty darkness in which I had been groping, a pretty girl was telling a story, as well as I could make out, to an attentive child upon her knee, while an old woman sat placidly dozing over the fire. You may be sure I was not behind-hand with a story for myself—a good old story after the manner of G. P. R. James and the village melodramas, with a wicked squire, and poachers, and an attorney, and a virtuous young man with a genius for mechanics, who should love, and protect, and ultimately marry the girl in the crimson room. Baudelaire has a few dainty sentences on the fancies that we are inspired with when we look through a window into other people's lives, and I think Dickens has somewhere enlarged on the same text. The subject, at least, is one that I am seldom weary of entertaining. I remember, night after night, at Brussels, watching a good family sup together, make merry, and retire to rest, and night after night I waited to see the candles lit, and the salad made, and the last salutations dutifully exchanged, without any abatement of interest. Night after night I found the scene rivet my attention and keep me awake in bed with all manner of quaint imaginations. Much of the pleasure of the *Arabian Nights* hinges upon this Asmodean interest, and we are not weary of lifting other people's roofs, and going about behind the scenes of life with the Caliph and the serviceable Giaffar. It is a salutary exercise, besides, it is salutary to get out of ourselves and see people living together in perfect unconsciousness of our existence, as they will live when we are gone. If to-morrow the blow falls, and the worst of our ill fears is realised, the girl will none the less tell stories to the child on her lap in the cottage at Great Missenden, nor the good Belgians light their candle, and mix their salad, and go orderly to bed.

The next morning was sunny overhead and damp under foot, with a thrill in the air like a reminiscence of frost. I went up into the sloping garden behind the inn and smoked a pipe pleasantly enough, to the tune of my landlady's lamentations over sundry cabbages and cauliflowers that had been spoiled by caterpillars. She had been so much pleased in the summer-time, she said, to see the garden all hovered over by white butterflies. And now, look at the end of it! She could nowise reconcile this with her moral sense. And, indeed, unless these butterflies are created with a side-look to the composition of improving *apologues*, it is not altogether easy, even for people who have read Hegel and Dr McCosh, to decide intelligibly upon the issue raised. Then I fell into a long and abstruse calculation with my landlord, having for object to compare the distance driven by him during eight years' service on the box of the Wendover coach with the girth of the round world itself. We tackled the question most conscientiously, made all necessary allowance for Sundays and leap-years, and were just coming to a triumphant conclusion of our labours when we were stayed by a small *lacuna* in my information. I did not know the circumference of the earth. The landlord knew it, to be sure—plainly he had made the same calculation twice and once before—but he wanted confidence in his own figures, and from the moment I showed myself so poor a second seemed to lose all interest in the result.

Wendover (which was my next stage) lies in the same valley with Great Missenden, but at the foot of it, where the hills trend off on either hand like a coast-line, and a great hemisphere of plain lies, like a sea, before one, I went up a chalky road, until I had a good outlook over the place. The vale, as it opened out into the plain, was shallow, and a little bare, perhaps, but full of graceful convolutions. From the level to which I have now attained the fields were exposed before me like a map, and I could see all that bustle of autumn fieldwork which had been hid from me yesterday behind the hedgerows, or shown to me only for a moment as I followed the footpath. Wendover lay well down in the midst, with mountains of foliage

about it The great plain stretched away to the northward, variegated near at hand with the quaint pattern of the fields, but growing ever more and more indistinct, until it became a mere hurly-burly of trees and bright crescents of river, and snatches of slanting road, and finally melted into the ambiguous cloud-land over the horizon The sky was an opal-grey, touched here and there with blue, and with certain faint russets that looked as if they were reflections of the colour of the autumnal woods below. I could hear the ploughmen shouting to their horses, the uninterrupted carol of larks innumerable overhead, and, from a field where the shepherd was marshalling his flock, a sweet tumultuous tinkle of sheep-bells All these noises came to me very thin and distinct in the clear air There was a wonderful sentiment of distance and atmosphere about the day and the place

I mounted the hill yet farther by a rough staircase of chalky footholds cut in the turf The hills about Wendover and, as far as I could see, all the hills in Buckinghamshire, wear a sort of hood of beech plantation, but in this particular case the hood had been suffered to extend itself into something more like a cloak, and hung down about the shoulders of the hill in wide folds, instead of lying flatly along the summit The trees grew so close, and their boughs were so matted together, that the whole wood looked as dense as a bush of heather The prevailing colour was a dull, smouldering red, touched here and there with vivid yellow But the autumn had scarce advanced beyond the outworks, it was still almost summer in the heart of the wood, and as soon as I had scrambled through the hedge, I found myself in a dim green forest atmosphere under eaves of virgin foliage In places where the wood had itself for a background and the trees were massed together thickly, the colour became intensified and almost gem-like a perfect fire of green, that seemed none the less green for a few specks of autumn gold None of the trees were of any considerable age or stature, but they grew well together, I have said, and as the road turned and wound among them, they fell into pleasant groupings and broke the light up pleasantly Sometimes there would be a

colonnade of slim, straight tree-stems with the light running down them as down the shafts of pillars, that looked as if it ought to lead to something, and led only to a corner of sombre and intricate jungle. Sometimes a spray of delicate foliage would be thrown out flat, the light lying flatly along the top of it, so that against a dark background it seemed almost luminous. There was a great hush over the thicket (for, indeed, it was more of a thicket than a wood), and the vague rumours that went among the tree-tops, and the occasional rustling of big birds or hares among the undergrowth, had in them a note of almost treacherous stealthiness, that put the imagination on its guard and made me walk warily on the russet carpeting of last year's leaves. The spirit of the place seemed to be all attention, the wood listened as I went, and held its breath to number my foot-falls. One could not help feeling that there ought to be some reason for this stillness, whether, as the bright old legend goes, Pan lay somewhere near in siesta, or whether, perhaps, the heaven was meditating rain, and the first drops would soon come pattering through the leaves. It was not unpleasant, in such an humour, to catch sight, ever and anon, of large spaces of the open plain. This happened only where the path lay much upon the slope, and there was a flaw in the solid leafy thatch of the wood at some distance below the level at which I chanced myself to be walking, then, indeed, little scraps of foreshortened distance, miniature fields, and Lilliputian houses and hedgerow trees would appear for a moment in the aperture, and grow larger and smaller, and change and melt one into another, as I continued to go forward, and so shift my point of view.

For ten minutes, perhaps, I had heard from somewhere before me in the wood a strange, continuous noise, as of clucking, cooing, and gobbling, now and again interrupted by a harsh scream. As I advanced towards this noise, it began to grow lighter about me, and I caught sight, through the trees, of sundry gables and enclosure walls, and something like the tops of a rickyard. And sure enough, a rickyard it proved to be, and a neat little farm-steading, with the beech-woods growing almost to the door of it. Just



before me, however, as I came upon the path, the trees drew back and let in a wide flood of daylight on to a circular lawn. It was here that the noises had their origin. More than a score of peacocks (there are altogether thirty at the farm), a proper contingent of peahens, and a great multitude that I could not number of more ordinary barn-door fowls, were all feeding together on this little open lawn among the beeches. They fed in a dense crowd, which swayed to and fro, and came hither and thither as by a sort of tide, and of which the surface was agitated like the surface of a sea as each bird guzzled his head along the ground after the scattered corn. (The clucking, cooing noise that had led me thither was formed by the blending together of countless expressions of individual contentment into one collective expression of contentment, or general grace during meat.) Every now and again a big peacock would separate himself from the mob and take a stately turn or two about the lawn, or perhaps mount for a moment upon the rail, and there shrilly publish to the world his satisfaction with himself and what he had to eat. It happened, for my sins, that none of these admirable birds had anything beyond the merest rudiment of a tail. Tails, it seemed, were out of season just then. But they had their necks for all that, and by their necks alone they do as much surpass all the other birds of our grey climate as they fall in quality of song below the blackbird or the lark. Surely the peacock with its incomparable parade of glorious colour and the scrannel voice of it issuing forth, as in mockery from its painted throat, must, like my landlady's butterflies at Great Missenden, have been invented by some skilful fabulist for the consolation and support of homely virtues; or rather, perhaps, by a fabulist not quite so skilful, who made points for the moment without having a studious enough eye to the complete effect, for I thought these melting greens and blues so beautiful that afternoon, that I would have given them my vote just then before the sweetest pipe in all the spring woods. For indeed there is no piece of colour of the same extent in nature, that will so flatter and satisfy the lust of a man's eyes, and to come upon so many of them, after these acres of

stone-coloured heavens and russet woods, and grey-brown ploughlands and white roads, was like going three whole days' journey to the southward, or a month back into the summer.

I was sorry to leave *Peacock Farm*—for so the place is called, after the name of its splendid pensioners—and go forwards again in the quiet woods. It began to grow both damp and dusk under the beeches, and as the day declined the colour faded out of the foliage, and shadow, without form and void, took the place of all the fine tracery of leaves and delicate gradations of living green that had before accompanied my walk. I had been sorry to leave *Peacock Farm*, but I was not sorry to find myself once more in the open road, under a pale and somewhat troubled-looking evening sky, and put my best foot foremost for the inn at Wendover.

Wendover, in itself, is a straggling, purposeless sort of place. Everybody seems to have had his own opinion as to how the street should go, or rather, every now and then a man seems to have arisen with a new idea on the subject, and led away a little sect of neighbours to join in his heresy. It would have somewhat the look of an abortive watering-place, such as we may now see them here and there along the coast, but for the age of the houses, the comely quiet design of some of them, and the look of long habitation, of a life that is settled and rooted, and makes it worth while to train flowers about the windows, and otherwise shape the dwelling to the humour of the inhabitant. The church, which might perhaps have served as rallying-point for these loose houses, and pulled the township into something like intelligible unity, stands some distance off among great trees; but the inn (to take the public buildings in order of importance) is in what I understand to be the principal street—a pleasant old house, with bay-windows, and three peaked gables, and many swallows' nests plastered about the eaves.

The interior of the inn was answerable to the outside indeed, I never saw any room much more to be admired than the low wainscoted parlour in which I spent the

remainder of the evening. It was a short oblong in shape, save that the fireplace was built across one of the angles so as to cut it partially off, and the opposite angle was similarly truncated by a corner cupboard. The wainscot was white, and there was a Turkey carpet on the floor, so old that it might have been imported by Walter Shandy before he retired, worn almost through in some places, but in others making a good show of blues and oranges, none the less harmonious for being somewhat faded. The corner cupboard was agreeable in design, and there were just the right things upon the shelves—decanters and tumblers, and blue plates, and one red rose in a glass of water. The furniture was old-fashioned and stiff. Everything was in keeping, down to the ponderous leaden inkstand on the round table. And you may fancy how pleasant it looked, all flushed and flickered over by the light of a brisk companionable fire, and seen, in a strange, tilted sort of perspective, in the three compartments of the old mirror above the chimney. As I sat reading in the great arm-chair, I kept looking round with the tail of my eye at the quaint, bright picture that was about me, and could not help some pleasure and a certain childish pride in forming part of it. The book I read was about Italy in the early Renaissance, the pageantries and the light loves of princes, the passion of men for learning, and poetry, and art, but it was written, by good luck, after a solid, prosaic fashion, that suited the room infinitely more nearly than the matter, and the result was that I thought less, perhaps, of Lippo Lippi, or Lorenzo, or Politian, than of the good Englishman who had written in that volume what he knew of them, and taken so much pleasure in his solemn polysyllables.

I was not left without society. My landlord had a very pretty little daughter, whom we shall call Lizzie. If I had made any notes at the time, I might be able to tell you something definite of her appearance. But faces have a trick of growing more and more spiritualised and abstract in the memory, until nothing remains of them but a look, a haunting expression, just that secret quality in a face that is apt to slip out somehow under the cunningest painter's touch, and leave the portrait dead for the lack

of it And if it is hard to catch with the finest of camel's-hair pencils, you may think how hopeless it must be to pursue after it with clumsy words If I say, for instance, that this look, which I remember as Lizzie, was something wistful that seemed partly to come of slyness and in part of simplicity, and that I am inclined to imagine it had something to do with the daintiest suspicion of a cast in one of her large eyes, I shall have said all that I can, and the reader will not be much advanced towards comprehension. I had struck up an acquaintance with this little damsel in the morning, and professed much interest in her dolls, and an impatient desire to see the large one which was kept locked away for great occasions And so I had not been very long in the parlour before the door opened, and in came Miss Lizzie with two dolls tucked clumsily under her arm She was followed by her brother John, a year or so younger than herself, not simply to play propriety at our interview, but to show his own two whips in emulation of his sister's dolls I did my best to make myself agreeable to my visitors, showing much admiration for the dolls and dolls' dresses, and, with a very serious demeanour, asking many questions about their age and character, I do not think that Lizzie distrusted my sincerity, but it was evident that she was both bewildered and a little contemptuous Although she was ready herself to treat her dolls as if they were alive, she seemed to think rather poorly of any grown person who could fall heartily into the spirit of the fiction Sometimes she would look at me with gravity and a sort of disquietude, as though she really feared I must be out of my wits Sometimes, as when I inquired too particularly into the question of their names, she laughed at me so long and heartily that I began to feel almost embarrassed But when, in an evil moment, I asked to be allowed to kiss one of them, she could keep herself no longer to herself Clambering down from the chair on which she sat perched to show me, Cornelia-like, her jewels, she ran straight out of the room and into the bar—it was just across the passage—and I could hear her telling her mother in loud tones, but apparently more in sorrow than in merriment,

that *the gentleman in the parlour wanted to kiss Dolly*. I fancy she was determined to save me from this humiliating action, even in spite of myself, for she never gave me the desired permission. She reminded me of an old dog I once knew, who would never suffer the master of the house to dance, out of an exaggerated sense of the dignity of that master's place and carriage.

After the young people were gone there was but one more incident ere I went to bed. I heard a party of children go up and down the dark street for a while, singing together sweetly. And the mystery of this little incident was so pleasant to me that I purposely refrained from asking who they were, and wherefore they went singing at so late an hour. One can rarely be in a pleasant place without meeting with some pleasant accident. I have a conviction that these children would not have gone singing before the inn unless the inn-parlour had been the delightful place it was. (At least, if I had been in the customary public room of the modern hotel, with all its disproportions and discomforts, my ears would have been dull, and there would have been some ugly temper or other uppermost in my spirit, and so they would have wasted their songs upon an unworthy hearer.)

Next morning I went along to visit the church. It is a long-backed, red-and-white building, very much restored, and stands in a pleasant graveyard among those great trees of which I have spoken already. The sky was drowned in a mist. Now and again pulses of cold wind went about the enclosure, and set the branches busy overhead, and the dead leaves scurrying into the angles of the church buttresses. Now and again, also, I could hear the dull sudden fall of a chestnut among the grass—the dog would bark before the rectory door—or there would come a clinking of pails from the stable-yard behind. But in spite of these occasional interruptions—in spite, also, of the continuous autumn twittering that filled the trees—(the chief impression somehow was one as of utter silence, insomuch that the little greenish bell that peeped out of a window in the tower disquieted me with a sense of some possible and more inharmonious disturbance.) The grass

was wet, as if with a hoar frost that had just been melted I do not know that ever I saw a morning more autumnal As I went to and fro among the graves, I saw some flowers set reverently before a recently erected tomb, and drawing near was almost startled to find they lay on the grave of a man seventy-two years old when he died We are accustomed to strew flowers only over the young, where love has been cut short untimely, and great possibilities have been restrained by death We strew them there in token that these possibilities, in some deeper sense, shall yet be realised, and the touch of our dead loves remain with us and guide us to the end And yet there was more significance, perhaps, and perhaps a greater consolation, in this little nosegay on the grave of one who had died old We are apt to make so much of the tragedy of death, and think so little of the enduring tragedy of some men's lives, that we see more to lament for in a life cut off in the midst of usefulness and love, than in one that miserably survives all love and usefulness, and goes about the world the phantom of itself, without hope, or joy, or any consolation These flowers seemed not so much the token of love that survived death, as of something yet more beautiful—of love that had lived a man's life out to an end with him, and been faithful and companionable, and not weary of loving, throughout all these years

The morning cleared a little, and the sky was once more the old stone-coloured vault over the fallow meadows and the russet woods, as I set forth on a dog-cart from Wendover to Tring The road lay for a good distance along the side of the hills, with the great plain below on one hand, and the beech-woods above on the other The fields were busy with people ploughing and sowing, every here and there a jug of ale stood in the angle of the hedge, and I could see many a team wait smoking in the furrow as ploughman or sower stepped aside for a moment to take a draught Over all the brown ploughlands, and under all the leafless hedgerows, there was a stout piece of labour abroad, and, as it were, a spirit of picnic The horses smoked and the men laboured and shouted and drank in the sharp autumn morning, so that one had a strong effect

of large, open-air existence The fellow who drove me was something of a humorist; and his conversation was all in praise of an agricultural labourer's way of life It was he who called my attention to these jugs of ale by the hedgerow, he could not sufficiently express the liberality of these men's wages, he told me how sharp an appetite was given by breaking up the earth in the morning air, whether with plough or spade, and cordially admired this provision of nature He sang *O fortunatos agricolas!* indeed, in every possible key, and with many cunning inflections, till I began to wonder what was the use of such people as Mr Arch, and to sing the same air myself in a more diffident manner

Tring was reached, and then Tring railway-station, for the two are not very near, the good people of Tring having held the railway, of old days, in extreme apprehension, lest some day it should break loose in the town and work mischief I had a last walk, among russet beeches as usual, and the air filled, as usual, with the carolling of larks, I heard shots fired in the distance, and saw, as a new sign of the fulfilled autumn, two horsemen exercising a pack of fox-hounds And then the train came and carried me back to London

## MIDDLE-CLASS

BY ARNOLD BENNETT

As a novelist, a creative artist working in the only literary "form" which widely appeals to the public, I sometimes wonder curiously what the public is. Not often, because it is bad for the artist to think often about the public. I have never by inquiry from those experts my publishers learnt anything useful or precise about the public. I hear the words "the public," "the public," uttered in awe or in disdain, and this is all. The only conclusion which can be drawn from what I am told is that the public is the public. Still, it appears that my chief purchasers are the circulating libraries. It appears that without the patronage of the circulating libraries I should either have to live on sixpence a day or starve. Hence, when my morbid curiosity is upon me, I stroll into Mudie's or the *Times* Book Club, or I hover round Smith's bookstall at Charing Cross.

The crowd at these places is the prosperous crowd, the crowd which grumbles at income-tax and pays it. Three hundred and seventy-five thousand persons paid income-tax last year, under protest they stand for the existence of perhaps a million souls, and this million is a handful floating more or less easily on the surface of the forty millions of the population. The great majority of my readers must be somewhere in this million. There can be few buyers of books who neither pay income-tax nor live on terms of dependent equality with those who pay it. I see at the counters people on whose foreheads it is written that they know themselves to be the salt of the earth. Their



assured, curt voices, their proud carriage, their clothes, the similarity of their manners, all show that they belong to a caste and that the caste has been successful in the struggle for life. It is called the middle-class, but it ought to be called the upper-class, for nearly everything is below it. I go to the Stores, to Harrod's Stores, to Barker's, to Rumpelmeyer's, to the Royal Academy, and to a dozen clubs in Albemarle Street and Dover Street, and I see again just the same crowd, well fed, well dressed, completely free from the cares which beset at least five-sixths of the English race. They have worries, they take taxis because they must not indulge in motor-cars, hansoms because taxis are an extravagance, and omnibuses because they really must economise. But they never look twice at twopence. They curse the injustice of fate, but secretly they are aware of their luck. When they have nothing to do, they say, in effect, "Let's go out and spend something." And they go out. They spend their lives in spending. They deliberately gaze into shop windows in order to discover an outlet for their money. You can catch them at it any day.

I do not belong to this class by birth. Artists very seldom do. I was born slightly beneath it. But by the help of God and strict attention to business I have gained the right of entrance into it. I admit that I have imitated its deportment, with certain modifications of my own, I think its deportment is in many respects worthy of imitation. I am acquainted with members of it, some are artists like myself, a few others win my sympathy by honestly admiring my work, and the rest I like because I like them. But the philosopher in me cannot, though he has tried, melt away my profound and instinctive hostility to this class. Instead of decreasing, my hostility grows. I say to myself, "I can never be content until this class walks along the street in a different manner, until that now absurd legend has been worn clean off its forehead." Henry Harland was not a great writer, but he said, *Il faut souffrir pour être sel*. I ask myself impatiently, "When is this salt going to begin to suffer?" That is my attitude towards the class. I frequent it but little. Never-

theless I know it intimately, nearly all the intimacy being on my side. For I have watched it during long, agreeable, sardonic months and years in foreign hotels. In foreign hotels you get the essence of it, if not the cream. Chief among its characteristics—after its sincere religious worship of money and financial success—I should put its intense self-consciousness as a class. The world is a steamer in which it is travelling saloon. Occasionally it goes to look over from the promenade deck at the steerage. Its feelings towards the steerage are kindly. But the tone in which it says “the steerage” cuts the steerage off from it more effectually than many bulkheads. You perceive also from that tone that it could never be surprised by anything that the steerage might do. Curious social phenomenon, the steerage! In the saloon there runs a code, the only possible code, the final code, and it is observed. If it is not observed, the infraction causes pain, distress. Another marked characteristic is its gigantic temperamental dullness, unresponsiveness to external suggestion, a lack of humour—in short, a heavy and half-honest stupidity, ultimate product of gross prosperity, too much exercise, too much sleep. Then I notice a grim passion for the status quo. This is natural. Let these people exclaim as they will against the structure of society, the last thing they desire is to alter it. This passion shows itself in a naïve admiration for everything that has survived its original usefulness, such as sail-drill and uniforms. Its mirror of true manhood remains that excellent and appalling figure, the Brushwood Boy. The passion for the status quo also shows itself in a general defensive, sullen hatred of all ideas whatever. You cannot argue with these people. “Do you really think so?” they will politely murmur, when you have asserted your belief that the earth is round, or something like that. And their tone says “Would you mind very much if we leave this painful subject? My feelings on it are too deep for utterance.” Lastly, I am impressed by their attitude towards the artist, which is medæval, or perhaps Roman. Blind to nearly every form of beauty, they scorn art, and scorning art they scorn artists. It was this class which, at inaugurations of

public edifices, invented the terrible toast-formula, "The architect *and* contractor." And if epics were inaugurated by banquet, this class would certainly propose the health of the poet and printer, after the King and the publishers. Only sheer ennui sometimes drives it to seek distraction in the artist's work. It prefers the novelist among artists because the novel gives the longest surcease from ennui at the least expenditure of money and effort.

It is inevitable that I shall be accused of exaggeration, cynicism, or prejudice probably all three. Whenever one tells the truth in this island of compromise, one is sure to be charged on these counts, and to be found guilty. But I too am of the sporting race, and forty years have taught me that telling the truth is the most dangerous and most glorious of all forms of sport. Alpine climbing in winter is nothing to it. I like it. I will only add that I have been speaking of the solid *bloc* of the caste, I admit the existence of a broad fringe of exceptions. And I truly sympathise with the *bloc*. I do not blame the *bloc*. I know that the members of the *bloc* are, like me, the result of evolutionary forces now spent. My hostility to the *bloc* is beyond my control, an evolutionary force gathering way. Upon my soul, I love the *bloc*. But when I sit among it, clothed in correctness, and reflect that the *bloc* maintains me and mine in a sort of comfort, because I divert its leisure, the humour of the situation seems to me enormous.

I continue my notes on the great, stolid, comfortable class which forms the backbone of the novel-reading public. The best novelists do not find their material in this class. Thomas Hardy, never. H. G. Wells, almost never, now and then he glances at it ironically, in an episodic manner. Iain White (Mark Rutherford), never. Rudyard Kipling, rarely, when he touches it, the reason is usually because it appears to embrace the military caste, and the result is usually such mawkish stories as *William the Conqueror* and *The Brushwood Boy*. J. M. Barrie, never. W. W. Jacobs, never. Murray Gilchrist, never. Joseph Conrad, never. Leonard Merrick, very slightly. George Moore, in a drama in *Muslin*, wrote a masterpiece about it twenty

years ago; *Vain Fortune* is also good, but for a long time it had ceased to interest the artist in him, and his very finest work ignores it. George Meredith was writing greatly about it thirty years ago. Henry James, with the chill detachment of an outlander, fingers the artistic and cosmopolitan fringe of it. In a rank lower than these we have William de Morgan and John Galsworthy. The former does not seem to be inspired by it. As for John Galsworthy, the quality in him which may possibly vitiate his right to be considered a major artist is precisely his fierce animosity to this class. Major artists are seldom so cruelly hostile to anything whatever as John Galsworthy is to this class. He does in fiction what John Sargent does in paint, and their inimical observation of their subjects will gravely prejudice both of them in the eyes of posterity. I think I have mentioned all the novelists who have impressed themselves at once on the public and genuinely on the handful of persons whose taste is severe and sure. There may be, there are, other novelists alive whose work will end by satisfying the tests of the handful. Whether any of these others deal mainly with the superior stolid comfortable, I cannot certainly say, but I think not. I am ready to assert that in quite modern English fiction there exists no large and impartial picture of the superior stolid comfortable which could give pleasure to a reader of taste. Rather hard on the class that alone has made novel-writing a profession in which a man can earn a reasonable livelihood!

The explanation of this state of affairs is obscure. True, that distinguished artists are very seldom born into the class. But such an explanation would be extremely inadequate. Artists often move creatively with ease far beyond the boundaries of their native class. Thomas Hardy is not a peasant, nor was Stendhal a marquis. I could not, with any sort of confidence, offer an explanation. I am, however, convinced that only a supreme artist could now handle successfully the material presented by the class in question. The material itself lacks interest, lacks essential vitality, lacks both moral and spectacular beauty. It powerfully repels the searcher after beauty and energy.

It may be in a decay One cannot easily recall a great work of art of which the subject is decadence

The backbone of the novel-reading public is excessively difficult to please, and rarely capable of enthusiasm Listen to Mudie subscribers on the topic of fiction, and you will scarcely ever hear the accent of unmixed pleasure It is surprising how even favourites are maltreated in conversation Some of the most successful favourites seem to be hated, and to be read under protest The general form of approval is a doubtful "Yee-s!" with a whole tail of unspoken "buts" lying behind it Occasionally you catch the ecstatic note, "Oh! Yes, a sweet book!" Or, with masculine curttness "Fine book, that!" (For example, *The Hill*, by Horace Annesley Vachell!) It is in the light of such infrequent exclamations that you may judge the tepid reluctance of other praise The reason of all this is twofold partly in the book, and partly in the reader The backbone dislikes the raising of any question which it deems to have been decided a peculiarity which at once puts it in opposition to all fine work, and to nearly all passable second-rate work It also dislikes being confronted with anything that it considers "unpleasant," that is to say, interesting It has a genuine horror of the truth neat It quite honestly asks "to be taken out of itself," unaware that to be taken out of itself is the very last thing it really desires What it wants is to be confirmed in itself Its religion is the *status quo* The difficulties of the enterprise of not offending it either in subject or treatment are, perhaps, already sufficiently apparent But incomparably the greatest obstacle to pleasing it lies in the positive fact that it prefers not to be pleased It undoubtedly objects to the very sensations which an artist aims to give If I have heard once, I have heard fifty times resentful remarks similar to "I'm not going to read any more bosh by *him*! Why, I simply couldn't put the thing down!" It is profoundly hostile to art, and the empire of art It will not willingly yield Its attitude to the magic spell is its attitude to the dentist's gas-bag This is the most singular trait that I have discovered in the backbone

Why, then, does the backbone put itself to the trouble of reading current fiction? The answer is that it does so, not with any artistic, spiritual, moral, or informative purpose, but simply in order to pass time. Lately, one hears, it has been neglecting fiction in favour of books of memoirs, often scandalous, and historical compilations, for the most part scandalous sexually. That it should tire of the fiction offered to it is not surprising, seeing that it so seldom gets the fiction of its dreams. The supply of good, workmanlike fiction is much larger to-day than ever it was in the past. The same is to be said of the supply of genuinely distinguished fiction. But the supply of fiction which really appeals to the backbone of the fiction-reading public is far below the demand. The backbone grumbles, but it continues to hire the offensive stuff, because it cannot obtain sufficient of the inoffensive—and time hangs so heavy! The caprice for grape-nut history and memoirs cannot endure, for it is partially a pose. Besides, the material will run short. After all, Napoleon only had a hundred and three mistresses, and we are already at Mademoiselle Georges. The backbone, always loyal to its old beliefs, will return to fiction with a new gusto, and the cycle of events will recommence.

But it is well for novelists to remember that, in the present phase of society and mechanical conditions of the literary market, their professional existence depends on the fact that the dullest class in England takes to novels merely as a refuge from its own dullness. And while it is certain that no novelist of real value really pleases that class, it is equally certain that without its support (willing or unwilling—usually the latter) no novelist could live by his pen. Remove the superior stolid comfortable, and the circulating libraries would expire. And exactly when the circulating libraries breathed their last sigh the publishers of fiction would sympathetically give up the ghost. If you happen to be a literary artist, it makes you think—the reflection that when you dine you eat the bread unwillingly furnished by the enemies of art and of progress!

## XI

### A FRIEND OF THE TOWN

By E. V. LUCAS

LONDONERS know much, but not all. A few secrets are still to be learned only in the provinces, and one of them is the true value of the bookstall man. In London a bookstall man is a machine, you throw pennies at him and in return he throws papers at you. Now and then he asks you to buy something that you don't want or recommends the new sevenpenny, but for the most part he treats you as a stranger, if not as a foe, and expects for himself treatment no better

But in the country . . .

Make your home in a small country town and see how long you can manage without becoming friendly with the bookstall man. For in the country he is a power. There is no longer any casual flinging of pennies, there is the weather to discuss, and a remark to drop on the headlines in the contents bill. "Another all-night sitting," you say, from the security given by eight good hours in bed. "ah, well, if people like to be Members of Parliament, let them!" Then you both laugh. Or, "What's this?—another new Peer?" Well, it will be your turn soon," you say—and then you both laugh again. But there is something more important than persiflage and gossip—there is the new novel to choose from the circulating library. For in the country the bookstall man is also the librarian and adviser, he not only sells papers, but he controls the reading of the neighbourhood. His advice is sound. His instinct dictates wisely. "Jacobs's latest," he says, "is splendid. I read it on Sunday." Not, of course, that he has any need to read a story to know that it is splendid, that would be too

mechanical He knows because he possesses the sixth sense with which successful handlers of books are gifted "What's new?" he replies, "well, here's something good Take that. You can't go wrong" Or, when in a dissuading mood (and nowadays librarians have to dissuade as much as recommend, poor doomed varminths), "That one? Oh! I don't think she would like that That's a little bit—well, it's strong, that's what it is I don't recommend that But here's a charming story by the author of *Milk and Water* . " And so forth

What some simple country people would do without their bookstall man I can't imagine Take Peter, for instance. Peter was the friend of three old ladies who lived in a southern seaport—a sleepy forgotten town with quiet, narrow, Georgian streets and vast stretches of mud in its harbour which the evening sun turned to gold These three old ladies—sisters and unmarried—lived together in a tiny red-brick house where their several personalities dovetailed perfectly, different as they were One was the practical managing sister, one was the humorous commentator, and one was the kindly dreamer All were generous and philanthropic, indeed their benefactions of thought and deed were the principal business of their placid lives, while the principal recreation was reading And herein lay the value of Peter, the bookstall man, for it was through his library that all their books came to them He too divined the character of the books that he circulated by the mere process of touch, and he was rarely wrong He knew to a grain exactly what was to be found in every book he recommended or did not recommend to these old ladies In so far as his recommendations went, Peter was always right, and probably his dissuasions were rightly based too, although that of course we shall never know, since his advice was duly taken

But it is no light matter, is it, to pick out suitable stories for three old-fashioned old ladies with very decided views as to what is fitting and nice, and what not, when the books (and here is the real difficulty) were to be read aloud? For this meant of course that the three personalities had to be taken into consideration Each book had to please, or



at any rate not offend, an old lady who was of a practical managing turn, and an old lady who was herself a bit of a quiz (as all good novelists must be), and an old lady who had Utopian dreams

Peter, you see, must have been rather remarkable "No," he would say, "I don't think Miss Dorcas would like that . . . the gambling passages . . . I'd recommend this if it weren't for Miss Kate But she'd never like the divorce proceedings . . ." And so on

Reading aloud was to these old ladies a kind of ritual They looked forward to it all day, and then as each chapter was finished they discussed it and approved or disapproved When it comes to analysing the pleasures of life, the privilege of approving and disapproving in conversation must be ranked very high, and reading aloud makes it so very harmless an amusement, since no tale-bearing is involved This they did, and not only during the reading, but at meals too, and often they would come down to breakfast after a rather wakeful night with new theories as to the conduct of hero or heroine Happy Peter, to set so much gentle machinery in motion!

Of course, he was not able always to satisfy their programme. Sometimes for weeks and weeks together no new books (not only fiction, of course memoirs and travels they were very fond of) would be published, but when he really struck gold how happy they all were I remember that I found them once—it was thirteen years ago—in a state of joyful excitement over one of Peter's most inspired suggestions—Miss Jewett's *Country of the Pointed Firs* Never could three old ladies of simple tastes and warm hearts have been more delighted with a printed page I wished Peter could have seen them

Is he still acting as friend to that little town, I wonder? He was so capable that probably he has been promoted to a wider sphere For that is what happens to these friends of the small town they are raised to positions of more importance and better salaries, and the chances are that the old personal intimacy goes altogether They may, for example, be elevated to the place of manager at, say, London Bridge Then is all their kindness and thought-

fulness over . they become machines . very targets for pennies and half-pennies all day long, with no time for the humaner intercourse.

Well, the price of getting on has always been heavy ; but here it is paid not only by the friend, but by the small town too . It is hard when nice old ladies are also penalised.

## XII

### A PHILOSOPHER THAT FAILED

By E. V. LUCAS

OF Oliver Edwards, nothing, I believe, is known beyond the fact that he had been at Pembroke College with Dr Johnson, that he was a solicitor in Barnard's Inn, that he married twice, that he lived on a little farm of sixty acres near Stevenage and came to London twice a week, and that he wore grey clothes and a wig with many curls, and went to church on Good Fridays. We know of Edwards' life only this, and of his speech we have only some dozen sentences, and yet he will live for ever, by virtue of having crossed the stage of literature on one fine morning one hundred and twenty-nine years ago. He might be likened to the bird with which the Venerable Bede compared the life of man in a famous and beautiful passage: the bird that flies out of the dark void into the lighted banqueting hall and out again into the void once more. So with Edwards for sixty years he was not, then he met Dr Johnson and his Boswell in Butcher Row, stayed with them for an hour, and was not again. But the hour was sufficient. it gave him time to make his one deathless remark. By virtue of that remark he lives, and will live.

Edwards's day was Good Friday, April 17, 1778—"a delightful day," says Boswell. How little the good Edwards can have thought, as he climbed out of his bed in Barnard's Inn that morning and donned his grey clothes and his curly wig, that he was about to become immortal. He spent, I take it, the early hours in his office, reading conveyances or deeds and writing letters, then he went to church, whither Dr Johnson and Boswell had also gone, to St Clement's, which through some strange stroke of

luck is standing, with the Doctor's pew intact within it, to this dark, irreverent, rebuilding day.

On the way Boswell (who could grow the flower quite easily now, having obtained much seed) remarked that Fleet Street was the most cheerful scene in the world, adding, skilfully as he thought, "Fleet Street is, in my mind, more delightful than Tempe!" The Doctor, however, having the same dislike of the imitator that most teachers and all cynics possess, had his dash of cold water ready "Ay, ay, but let it be compared with Mull." So they passed on to church, where the Doctor was pleased to see so numerous a congregation.

"It was after church that they met Edwards, whom Johnson had not seen for forty years. The recognition came from the lawyer, a talkative, friendly, and not easily daunted man, who thereafter quickly got to work and enlarged to Boswell on the pleasure of living in the country. Boswell, again in the true Johnsonian manner, replied, "I have no notion of this, sir. What you have to entertain you is, I think, exhausted in half an hour." But Edwards was deeper and more sincere. "What," he said, "don't you love to have hope realised? I see my grass, and my corn, and my trees growing. Now, for instance, I am curious to see if this frost has not nipped my fruit trees." Johnson, who had been in a revere, possibly missing the familiar scent of incense,—for, in spite of Boswell's innuendoes to the contrary, Edwards does not appear to have been at all impressed by the magnitude and lustre of his old friend,—here remarked, "You find, sir, you have fears as well as hopes," and I am glad he did so, for it gave Boswell the opportunity to add the reflection, "So well did he see the whole when another saw but the half of a subject." And yet it is more than likely that Edwards saw the whole too.

Being comfortably seated in the Bolt Court library on this sunny Good Friday, Edwards, who had already commented with delightful bluntness, but perfect innocence, on the Doctor's age, remarked, "Sir, I remember you would not let us say 'prodigious' at college. For even then," he added, turning to Boswell, "he was delicate in language, and we all feared him." Johnson said nothing

of this at the time, but to his Boswell said afterwards, in private, "Sir, they respected me for my literature"—meaning by "they" the undergraduates—"and yet it was not great but by comparison Sir, it is amazing how little literature there is in the world" That was one hundred and twenty-nine years ago, and it is amazing still

12. The conversation with Edwards then turned to money, and it came out that the lawyer had given much away. He also admitted to a longing to be a parson and live in comfort and comparative idleness. Johnson had an opening here, and took it. "I would rather have Chancery suits upon my hands," he said, "than the care of souls. No, sir, I do not envy a clergyman's life as an easy life, nor do I envy the clergyman who makes it an easy life." Edwards, however, did. There is no evidence that the Doctor convinced him. My impression is that he was never convinced by anyone's arguments. I picture him as the kind of man who goes through life contentedly, secure in his own opinion.

Nothing could daunt Edwards, and so innocent and happy was he that he had no notion he was not observing the strict rules of the game. The rules of the Johnson conversational game made it imperative that you should utter only questions or provocative opinions, and then wait for the answer and receive it humbly. But Edwards smilingly broke them all. He asked questions, it is true, but long before the Doctor could reply he had volunteered, with appalling hardihood, scraps of autobiography. If there is one thing an autobiographer like Johnson cannot stand it is the autobiography of others. And yet the Doctor, with his great human imagination, knew that Edwards was a pearl of sincerity and candour, and in his heart, I am sure, valued him accordingly. "I have been twice married, Doctor," said Edwards, apropos of nothing, cheerily adding the terrifying sentiment, "You, I suppose, have never known what it was to have a wife?" This—to Johnson! We can see Boswell shivering on his chair's edge. "Sir," said Dr Johnson, "I have known what it was to have a wife, and [in a solemn, tender, faltering tone] I have known what it was to lose a wife. It had

almost broke my heart." Edwards was unabashed. He said instantly, "How do you live, sir?" adding, "For my part, I must have my regular meals and a glass of good wine." Dr. Johnson replied suitably—the kind of reply that would usually settle the matter among his guests—"I now drink no wine, sir. Early in life I drank wine, for many years I drank none. I then for some years drank a great deal." Edwards rose to a fine height of irreverence here, to the immense dismay, I have no doubt, of Boswell, who, with all his advantages, had not been at Pembroke with his hero. He cut in with, "Some hogsheads, I warrant you." The Doctor succeeded in taking no notice (quite possibly he was secretly flattered, we all like to be credited with great deeds), and continued his dull alimentary history, but the victory was Edwards's, for the Doctor, when asked if he ate supper, merely and very uncharacteristically said "No," leaving it for his visitor to remark, with something of the great man's own manner made human, "For my part, now, I consider supper as a turnpike through which one must pass in order to get to bed."

That is good enough, but it is not the single remark by which Edwards is known—on which his deathless fame rests. That had come earlier. "You are a philosopher, Dr. Johnson," said Edwards. "I have tried, too, in my time to be a philosopher, but I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in." That was Edwards's great speech. By virtue of that candid confession he takes his place with the shining company of simple souls, the hierarchy of the ingenuous. It was too much for Boswell, who had no eye for children, young or old. But on repeating it to Mr. Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Malone, and, indeed, all the eminent men he knew, they said with one accord that "it was an exquisite trait of character." He therefore refrained from belittling it in the book.

To Boswell's intense relief, Edwards at last went. He had begun by calling Dr. Johnson (who was sixty-nine) old, he left with another reference to his age. Looking him full in the face, he said, "You'll find in Dr. Young the line,

'O my coevals! remnants of yourself—'

When he was gone, Boswell came to himself again, and quickly remarked that he thought him a weak man; and the Doctor, smarting under the imputation of senility, was, I regret to say, weak enough to agree. But they were both wrong. Edwards was a strong man—strong in his cheerfulness and his transparency.

## XIII

### THE RECRUITING OFFICE

By C A ALINGTON

It was certainly a Recruiting Office in which I found myself. There was no doubt about that. There were all the usual posters on the wall—"Your King and Country need you"—and the appeals to the Young Men of Shropshire—all ending with God save the King. And there was a man sitting at a desk in the corner busy entering some names in a book. Of course one is usually rather afraid of interrupting military people, but he looked kind-hearted, so I plucked up my courage to ask him a question or two.

"I beg your pardon," I said, "but can you tell me how recruiting is getting on? I hear it hasn't been going very fast in Shropshire lately."

"Oh, I don't know," said he, putting down his pen. "It's pretty much as usual. Seventy or eighty have come in from Shrewsbury to-day."

"That's rather good, isn't it?" said I. "I suppose that comes from lowering the standard a bit?"

"Oh dear, no," said he. "We never lower our standard, it's been the same for generations."

And of course I knew that wasn't quite true, but I was too polite to contradict him. So I simply said, "And what about these recruits. Were they good specimens, do you think?"

"Oh yes, I think so," said he. "I don't know that they were specially clever, but they all seem pretty keen, and I think they will learn their business. Anyhow, their hearts are in the right place."

I thought this was rather an unprofessional way of looking at it, but after all it was his office and not mine,



so I decided to change the subject "I suppose what's wanted," I said, "is something like an invasion to quicken things up? If the enemy was in the country people would soon see the need"

"My dear man," said he, "the enemy's in the country right enough. We got a poster out about that years and years ago." And he handed me a copy in which my eye caught the words, "Your adversary, like a roaring lion, is going about seeking whom he may devour." It seemed to me a little profane, though I didn't like to say so. So I only asked another question.

"I suppose you mean Spies by that? And, of course, I quite agree with you the way these Germans——"

And then he burst out laughing. "Oh no, I didn't mean Germans," he said "and I wonder what you think we've been talking about all this time?"

"Why, recruiting," said I.

"Oh yes, recruiting," said he, "but recruiting what for?"

"Why, the British Army, of course," said I.

"Oh, that's where the mistake comes in," said he "this isn't only a local office, I am the Recording Angel making up my books, and I was just putting down the names of those who were Confirmed this morning."

I was rather indignant, thinking I had been made a fool of, so I said "I don't think you ought to mislead one by putting up all those placards about 'Your King and Country need you,' and the rest of them."

"Oh, come," said he "that's your own fault. You are always singing hymns about having a greater King and a better Country somewhere else, and you can't blame us for having supposed you meant it."

I didn't quite know what the answer to that was, so I thought I would rather make a bold attempt to change the subject again. "I should rather like to ask you one or two things about Confirmation," I said "does it really do any good? A lot of people say it doesn't."

He looked about among the papers on his desk, and when he had found what he was looking for he said "You said you know all about recruiting, so tell me whether this oath does any good to a recruit."

"I . . . swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown, and dignity against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me So help me God."

"Of course it does," I answered at once, "a fellow must be the better for saying a thing like that—at least, of course, he is if he means it. If he doesn't mean it I don't suppose it would do him any good. In fact, he might even be the worse for taking it like that. I suppose you can't say whether he is the better or not," I ended rather lamely, "it depends on him."

"Just so," said the Recording Angel, smiling. "It's just the same with our oath too, it can't do anyone much good to tell lies, whether he tells them to God or to man."

"But a lot of the best people aren't confirmed," I went on. "I know quite a lot of awfully good people who——"

"My good fellow," he interrupted, "do you really suppose that the British Army at the present moment consists of all the best young men in the country? I haven't the least doubt that thousands of the people who look on at football matches are far superior to a lot of people who've joined. You don't join the Army because you feel good, but because you want to do your duty."

"Well, a lot of people have told me," I said, "that they never felt at all the better for it, they go on having just as many difficulties as before, and they don't always conquer them by any means."

"The other day," said he, "a recruit came to his Colonel after a month and complained bitterly that his chest hadn't got any bigger, and that he wasn't any taller than when he started. And do you know what the Colonel said?"

"No," said I.

"Nor do I," said the Recording Angel. "I made rather a point of forgetting, for I think that the Colonel was quite right to lose his temper, but the main point of his remarks

was that if the recruit thought the British Army existed for the sake of widening his chest he made a considerable mistake. He added that he was under the impression that the young man had joined the Army to try and serve his country, and not to improve his own physique, and that if he couldn't grasp that idea, the sooner he cleared out of it the better."

"Yes, I see that," said I, "but surely it doesn't all depend on what a fellow does for himself, he does get some good out of it, doesn't he? What is this Spirit we hear such a lot about?"

The Angel was just going to answer me when there was the sound of a bugle in the distance and he changed his mind. "Come to the window for a minute," said he, "it's a hard thing to put into words, and seeing's believing, you know." And he drew aside the blind and we looked out into the night.

I wonder if you remember what happened to Elisha's servant when the prophet prayed that his eyes should be opened. I think he must have uttered that prayer about me, for I saw, as he did, that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about. And what I saw, of course, I can't describe, for it has been described once for all in the Book of the Revelation of St John the Divine—but there were the armies in heaven on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And there was a banner at the head of the whole Army, and I don't imagine you will need to be told what that was—but I read the motto beneath it, and it was "Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But there were banners, too, with other inscriptions on them, and as I was looking at them, "There go the local regiments," said the Angel. "they'll interest you." And I saw the banner with the words on it, "Thy need is greater than mine," and side by side with it one with a picture of a wounded officer dragging a soldier into a narrow trench and putting him in the only place of safety.

"What jolly things those soldiers do," the Angel said over my shoulder. "I sometimes think they have the best

of both worlds You know what your own Shropshire poet says about them, or rather about the 53rd

'To slies that knit their heartstrings right,  
To fields that bred them brave,  
The saviours come not home to night -  
Themselves they could not save'

But you mustn't forget the rest, all the same "

And as I looked where he pointed I saw a crowd of civilians, doctors and lawyers and parsons, men and women, masters and boys, all marching on with their heads in the same direction, and right at the tail of the procession I saw a small company of people, some of whose faces I thought I could recognise

"Yes, they are the recruits," he said, "they haven't got their uniforms yet nor their rifles either, but they are learning to keep step It's a good tune to march to, that tune of Sullivan's," and he hummed a bar or two of 'Onward, Christian Soldiers.'

"And now," he said, shutting the window and turning round on me, "I can't tell you how much God does for them or how much they have to do for themselves, but I know that that whole Army has one spirit in it, and I think I know Whose Spirit it is, and I know that a man or a boy is never the same when he has sworn to belong to that company and tried to be worthy of it, for it is the Blessed Company of all Faithful People "

## XIV

### A CONVERSATION

By C A ALINGTON

July 23, 1916

OF course buildings will not talk much when boys are about it is not to be expected that they should they say a good deal when everyone is in school, or after locking-up But the time they like best is a Sunday evening in summer just before Chapel It's the quietest time in the whole year the only sound is that which comes from the choir in Chapel, and there's never anyone about but me, and they seem to have got used to that, so that they do not mind talking in my presence

And so I wasn't surprised, this evening, to hear a conversation going on at that time between the Darwin Buildings and the Armoury I wasn't surprised, but I was a good deal pleased, for I knew that they hadn't always been on the best of terms There had been a dispute about a footpath which had put things very crooked between them, and, besides that, it's rather a test of friendship to have to live so close together for so long, with never a chance of moving

And so, I say, I was very glad to hear the Darwin Buildings say in quite a friendly tone "And how do you think the war is going?" The Armoury was evidently pleased "Oh, quite well, I think," it said, "though the casualty lists are bad reading I seldom have that old song of the Shropshires out of my head, when I see these people out on parade

' And you will list the bugle  
' That blows in lands of morn,  
And make the foes of England  
Be sorry you were born

And you till trump of doomsday  
On lands of morn may lie,  
And make the hearts of comrades  
Be heavy when you die '

It's pretty nearly literally true nowadays," ended the Armoury with a sigh

"Do you know," said the Darwin Buildings, "I have a confession to make I used to think you were a bit of a pro-German, no doubt it was very stupid, but in old days 'blood and iron' seemed rather too Prussian for my taste. It's very different now "

The Armoury laughed tolerantly "Well, I must say your conversion's been pretty complete! And I can't say too much of the way you've been helping us Not but what," it went on, "I'm not at all sure you aren't spoiling the game Aeroplanes are all very well, though what Stonewall Jackson or the Duke would have made of them I can't imagine But when it comes to gas and liquid fire and all that, I sometimes wish you'd left it alone. It's illogical, I know, and we gave the whole case away when we took to guns, but somehow a man and a horse and a sword seem the right things to make a battle out of, and when I think of an old scientific man who couldn't march a mile making all these devilish inventions, I confess I wish you'd kept out of it But that's just like converts, they're always inclined to overdo it "

I must own that I was a little nervous when I heard this, for I was not at all sure how the Darwin Buildings would take it But to my great relief it did not seem at all put out

"Perhaps my conversion isn't quite as complete as all that," it said smiling, "after all, this is an exceptional war, isn't it?" "Exceptional," said the Armoury, "I should just think it was! Why, I don't suppose that there's ever been a set of people like the Germans, so completely——" "Quite so, quite so," said the Darwin Buildings, "but that wasn't exactly what I meant It's the *object* of this war that seems to me so different to any of the others, and that's why I'm so keen on it " "I don't see what you're driving at," said the Armoury. "My idea



educated because we don't believe in education. Now if the people of this country were only scientifically trained they'd know there were better things to do than fighting. Fancy wasting our best brains when there are countless things crying out to be done at home! why, if I had my way and people would listen to me we'd make a new country of it. A healthy and happy place, instead of one where 125 children out of every 1000 die before they are one, and three-quarters of the people live on the verge of starvation."

"Oh, come," said the Armoury, "that's rather strong. You've got your scientifically trained nation in Germany, and how do you like the results? Give me our old Public Schools after all. I'd rather have Edward Grey than Bethmann-Hollweg any day of the week. The Hall told me that the Headmaster said that the other day, and I thought it very good sense. Why, what is the object of education?"

And then a strange thing happened. I daresay you've noticed that a question like that is always sure to be answered by every one, whether he's qualified or not, and there began a rare medley of sound—old proverbial phrases bandied about so that one could hardly detach the sense from the sound.

"A sound mind in a sound body," said the five courts, and the cricket field said, "Hear, hear!" "Train the eye and the hand," said the carpenter's shop. "Study Nature," said the museum. "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," murmured the baths. "Rule, Britannia," cried the flagstaff, "what was good enough for our fathers is good enough for us!" As the din died down, I heard a voice which hadn't spoken before. "I know I'm very young," said the Moser Buildings, "but, after all, I've had a long time to think it over while I've been building, and I should like to say a word or two. You're both right in a way, so far as I can see—and I don't like hearing people quarrel when there's nothing to quarrel about—but there's the Chapel bell beginning, and the boys will be coming past in a minute. I'd rather keep my ideas till next Sunday."



July 30, 1916

"As I was saying," said the Moser Buildings,<sup>1</sup> "you're both right in a way, and yet you're both wrong. I know that's an irritating thing to say, but one gets to be broad-minded if one has to do with a library and sees all the different kinds of things there are to be learnt in the world. And my idea is that Beauty is the thing that matters."

The Armoury and the Darwin Buildings were plainly a little suspicious. "I don't know much about Art," said the latter, "and I can't say I see it has much to do with it. Both I and my friend here are plain people, and in our different ways we both want to get things done, we haven't the time to spend on considering whether things look pretty."

"Ah!" said the Moser Buildings, "I see you think of Beauty in the narrow sense. I don't mean that, though it's a good thing in its way. But there's Beauty in a scientific experiment, isn't there? You know a lot better than I do the splendid neatness and precision with which your people work. And there's Beauty in soldiering, too, though it's of a different kind. I don't mean the Beauty of equipment: the Household Brigade charging on foot at Ypres were far more beautiful than they'd ever been on parade."

"Oh, that's all right," said the Armoury, appreciably mollified, "but it doesn't seem to get us much forrarder. Supposing we are all after Beauty, where is it to be found?"

"Well," said the Moser Buildings, "there are two people whom I've had to do with lately who've taught me a lot about it, and they happen to represent your two professions: one's Philip Sidney, and the other's Darwin. You'd be surprised to know how those two get on together, and yet it's not so very surprising, after all. One gave his life for his country, and the other gave his to the world, but the point is that they both gave their lives for a cause they

<sup>1</sup> The Moser Buildings contain a library, reading room, and picture gallery. Philomathes and Polumathes are two stone figures of Tudor schoolboys copied from those on the Old School in the town, and representing, it is thought, a boy when he comes and the same boy when he leaves.

thought good. They both cared about truth more than anything else, and they neither of them despised small things. Sidney didn't despise the common soldier, and Darwin didn't despise the common earthworm, and that's why they both made names that will live for ever. Love the Truth, and give yourself for it—that's what Beauty is, and Education means knowing Beauty whenever and wherever you see it, and being ready to give your life for the cause. That's what they try to teach them here, and always have done. Ask these young gentlemen standing outside, they're always ready to talk about their school-days—rather nonsense it is sometimes, but they're nice boys. What do you think, Philomathes? Is there anything you can say about what you learnt at school?"

Philomathes was evidently delighted to have a chance of talking. "Of course I can," said he, "there are a lot of old school songs I could repeat to you if you like, of course they were in oldish English, but I've brought them up to date. There's a nice one that begins

'When I first went to school, I was stupid and silly,  
Full little I learnt, but I learnt willy-nully

"Oh, nonsense," said the Moser Buildings, "that's just swagger, you know you were always a very industrious little boy, though you pretend to be ashamed of it. Let's have something else."

"There's rather a nice one," said Philomathes, "about the school as a whole. It's rather long, but you won't mind that

'For some the rule of a lord they love  
And for some of a prince they fear,  
But for us the rule of a single school  
Since the hour that brought us here  
For we bowed that day to the sovereign sway .'"

"Oh, we know all that," said the Moser Buildings, "let's get more into detail."

"I'm sorry you don't care for that," said Philomathes, "there are some nice bits later on.

'At work and game, as the seasons came,  
Our crowns we laid at her feet,'

and

'She sends us forth to South and North,  
We range to East and West——'

wouldn't you like that?"

"No, no," said the Moser Buildings, "it's all right, but it's all so dreadfully commonplace I must ask your brother." "He's not my brother," said Philomathes, grinning, "he's only me grown older." "Older and wiser, I hope," said the Moser Buildings. "Now then, Polumathes, can you tell us any more about it? You're called a learned fellow; what *was* it you learnt at school?"

Polumathes seemed to be thinking hard

"It's not very easy to tell you," he said at length, "perhaps it would be simpler if I sang you a little song I've made up about it. It's not very good, I know, but it's all true so far as it goes." He cleared his throat and began, the tune was one I didn't know, but he sang with great conviction.

"There is one great rule that is taught at school  
To every Christian man,  
Nay, Infidel, Heretick, Jew, and Turk  
Know one commandment they may not shirk,  
And that is the law that a boy must work  
If he'd be a learned man

And the second rule that is taught at school  
To every Christian man  
Is to seek for truth wherever it lies,  
For truth it is that must make us wise,  
And truth is the light that lightens the eyes  
Of every learned man

There's a third great rule that they taught at school,  
And thus is the way it ran  
To fight for the things that a man loves most,  
And to give his life, not counting the cost,  
For a life so given is a life well lost—  
Saith every learned man

These be the rules that are taught in schools  
Since first my days began,  
To learn to serve ere you learn to rule,  
Not to serve yourself, but to serve the school.  
And he that keepeth them not is a fool,  
As I am a learned man!"

"Bravo," cried the Armoury, "that's good sense, I agree with every word of it." The Darwin Buildings was not quite so enthusiastic. "It sounds very nice," it said, "and I don't deny a good deal of it's true, but I can't say that the part about work and caring for truth is so well observed as the rest of it. And it's all very well," it went on, turning to the Mower Buildings, "but you haven't really told us why a man should care about truth and self-sacrifice and all these things, we aren't likely to find out the real object of education till we know that." "Ah, there," said the Mower Buildings, "you're getting a bit out of my depth, I know Beauty's a good thing, and I know there's a lot more beauty to be found than most people look for, but when you ask me why it's beautiful, or what all the fighting's about, you get a little beyond me. Let's ask the Chapel; it's more the Chapel's job to settle things like that. Have you been listening?" it went on, turning to the Chapel.

"Yes, I've heard it all," said the Chapel, "and I think there's a great deal in all that you've been saying. There's only one thing you've left out, but it's a biggish omission—and that's the Devil. No, don't say, 'Hang theology,'" it added to the Darwin Buildings, which blushed scarlet. "I only mean that when you said last week that there was lots of fighting to be done in peace, it was what I call the Devil that has to be fought. The Devil's the Father of Lies, just as much as he's the father of Selfishness, and the father of Ugliness, and you three are all fighting him in your different ways. He hates good soldiers, and he hates good artists, and I haven't the least doubt that he simply loathes good men of science. And as for our young friend here," it went on, looking at Polumathes, "perhaps what he said was a bit exuberant, but when is a fellow to let himself go a bit, if not when he's talking about his own school? And he's quite right in what he said about the things they try to teach them here, some learn better than others, of course, but I think they all learn a little. And anyhow, just when they're leaving, they try and remember what they've learnt. You'd know more about it if you'd had my chances of hearing them sing. There's

a hymn they're practising to-night, for instance—why, there it is ! ” And in the distance we could all hear the music of the organ, and all the buildings were very silent as we listened to the words that were borne on the air .

“ Lord, Thou hast brought us to our journey's end  
Once more to Thee our evening prayers ascend,  
(Once more we stand to praise Thee for the past;  
Grant prayer and praise be honest at the last ! )

For all the joys which Thou hast deigned to share,  
For all the pains which Thou hast helped to bear,  
For all our friends, in life and death the same,  
We thank Thee, Lord, and praise Thy glorious name

If from Thy paths, by chastening undismayed,  
If for Thy gifts ungrateful, we have strayed,  
If in Thy house our prayers were faint and few,  
Forgive, O Lord, and build our hearts anew

(If we have learnt to feel our neighbour's need,  
To fight for truth in thought and word and deed)  
If these be lessons which the years have taught,  
Then stablish, Lord, what Thou in us hast wrought

So be our rest Thy palaces most fair,  
Not built with hands, whose stones Thy praise declare  
(Where war is not, and all Thy sons are free,  
Where Thou art known, and all is known in Thee ! ”

## XV

# IF NAPOLEON HAD WON THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO<sup>1</sup>

BY G. MACAULAY TREVELYAN

THE day of the signature of the Convention of Brussels, June 26, 1815, is the point of time that divides into two strangely contrasted halves the greatest career of modern times, and ushers in the reign of the Napoleon of Peace. When, in that little room in the Hôtel de Ville, now filled every morning by crowds of tourists, the red-coated patrician, who had once been regarded by his partial countrymen as the rival of the lord of armies, sat listening in proud and stoical humiliation to the torrent of words poured forth in dispraise of war by his perambulatory host, who, with clenched fists, invoked the Goddess of Peace, the laconic Englishman probably thought that he was present at a Napoleonic farce of the usual character. He did not guess that his conqueror had in all truth drained the cup of Peace, a draught as bitter to Napoleon as Defeat was bitter to his conquered foe. Wellington, indeed, during the terrible week between the battle and the Convention, had not uttered one complaint against Blücher for breaking tryst, nor shown to his staff-officers one sign of his agony—beyond the disuse of his customary oaths.

A new Napoleon had been evolved, the Napoleon of Peace, a mere shadow, in spiritual and intellectual force, of his former self. The Buonaparte of 1796 would have urged the advance of Ney's columns until they had destroyed the last of Wellington's regiments, and would himself, with the bulk of his army, have fallen on the traces

<sup>1</sup> In July 1907 the *Westminster Gazette* offered a prize for an essay on this subject. This was the successful essay.

of Blücher, instead of suffering him to effect a junction with the Austrians and Russians, and so present a barrier to the French reconquest of Germany. Nor would the Napoleon of 1813, who refused, in defeat, the most favourable offers of a settlement, have hesitated after such a victory as that of Mont St Jean to undertake with a light heart the subjugation of Central and Eastern Europe. But the Napoleon of 1815, one week after his triumphal entry into Brussels, was offering to Wellington the same facilities to evacuate the seat of war which the English general had offered at Cintra, seven years before, to the defeated lieutenant of the Emperor. And this unexpected clemency was extended to England, in order as easily and as quickly as possible to remove from the scene of affairs and from the counsels of the Continental monarchs the paymaster and inveterate instigator of war, and so to clear the stage for Napoleon and the time-serving Metternich to arrange by collusion a permanent and lasting peace for all Europe, not exclusive of England herself.

Whence came this extraordinary change in the intentions, one might say in the character, of the French Emperor? The history of what passed in the headquarters at Brussels between June 16 and 26 can never be fully known, though whole libraries have been written upon the subject. Secret agents of Metternich had been in Brussels as early as June 14, with orders, in case Wellington were defeated, instantly to offer Napoleon the Rhine frontier and the bulk of the Italian Peninsula, and to represent to him how utterly impossible it was that he should hold down Germany after the national movement of 1813. The latter argument, though based upon a just insight into the condition of the Fatherland, would have had little effect upon the man to whom it was addressed had he been sure of support from France herself. But, so far from being dazzled by the news of Mont St Jean, Paris, on June 20, formed a determined alliance of all classes and all parties—Liberals, Jacobins, Royalists, and old servants of the Empire—to insist upon peace. The representatives commissioned by the Chambers and by other bodies, official and unofficial alike, were welcomed in the Belgian

capital, and supported in their petition by all the marshals and by almost every superior officer. But Napoleon's will, it appears, was not finally overcome until the great review of June 24, held outside the town for the purpose of testing the attitude of the common soldiers. Though most of them were veterans, they had too lately rejoined the camp to be altogether insensible to the national feeling, many of them had come out to liberate France, not to subjugate Europe—a task which no longer seemed as easy as before the days of Borodino and Leipzig. The long shout for "Peace" that ran down the lines seems to have dazed the Emperor. He spoke no word to the assembled troops to thank them for the late victory, rode slowly back like one in a trance, dismounted in the square, passed through the ante-chamber staring vacantly at his marshals and Ministers as if on men whom he had never seen before. As he reached the threshold of his cabinet his eye lit upon the Mameluke by the door, who alone in all the crowd was gazing with intense devotion on his master. The Corsican stopped, and still in a reverie, interpellated the Oriental. "The Franks are tired of war, and we two cannot ride out alone. Besides, we are growing old. One grows old and dies. The Pyramids they grow old, but they do not die." Then, with intense energy, he added "Do you think one will be remembered after forty centuries?" He stood for a moment, as if waiting for an answer from the mute, then dashed through the door, flung himself at the table, and began dictating messages of peace to Wellington and the allied Sovereigns.

Napoleon's physical condition probably contributed no less than the attitude of the French army and people to the formation of his great resolution, during the critical week, the decision between peace and war seems to have been as much as he could attend to in his waking hours, which were greatly curtailed by his peculiar malady. Hence it was that he made no serious effort to follow Blücher's retreat through Namur, beyond leaving a free hand to Grouchy. Though he was not yet sufficiently cognisant of his growing feebleness to delegate to anyone either his military or political duties, he seems to have



been subconsciously aware that the two together were beyond his strength. It is, therefore, not strange that he decided to accept the Rhine frontier and the hegemony in the Italian Peninsula as the basis of a permanent peace, and that his ever-increasing lassitude of body kept him faithful to the decision during the last twenty years of his life.

Those years were a period of but slight change for Europe. Monarchs and peoples were too much exhausted to engage in war for the alteration of frontiers, internal reform or revolution was rendered impossible by the great standing armies, which the very existence of Napoleon on the French throne, valetudinarian though he was known to be, rendered necessary, or at least excusable, in England, Austria, and the German States. Hatred of the crowned Jacobin, and fear of renewed French invasions, gave to the Governments of the *ancien régime* a measure of popularity with the middle classes which they would not otherwise have enjoyed, it has even been suggested that reform might have made some notable step forward in England within twenty years of Mont St Jean, had the great Tory champion succeeded in overthrowing the revolutionary Emperor on the field of battle.

As it was, the condition of England was most unhappy. In spite of the restoration of trade with the Continent, impeded indeed by the extravagantly high tariffs due to Napoleon's military ideas of economic science, in spite of our continued supremacy at sea, the distress grew yearly more intolerable, both among the rural and industrial populations. The taxation necessary for the maintenance of both fleet and army on a war footing allowed no hope of amelioration, yet while Napoleon lived and paraded his own army and fleet as the expensive toys of his old age, the Tory Ministers could see no possibility of reduction on their part. Probably they were glad of the excuse, for the great army enabled them to defy the Reformers, who became ever more violent as year after year passed by without prospect of change. If Mont St Jean had been a victory for England, and if it had been followed by that general disarmament to which Wellington himself had looked forward as the natural consequence of Napoleon's

downfall, Catholic Emancipation must have been granted to Ireland, and this concession would at least have averted the constant revolts and massacres in that unhappy country which so sorely tempted Napoleon to resume hostilities during the last ten years of his life. In Great Britain, where starvation and repression were the order of the day, there occurred in 1825 the ill-advised but romantic rebellion of Lord Byron, in whose army the rank and file consisted almost entirely of working men, and the leaders (except Napier) had no more knowledge of war than was possessed by such ruffians as Thistlewood and the ex-pirate Trelawny. The savage reprisals of Government established the blood-feud between one half of England and the other. The execution of Lord Byron made a greater noise in the world than any event since the fall of the Bastille, though it was not immediately followed by political changes. After two years of terror, Canning, who was always suspected by his colleagues of semi-popular sympathies, restored partial freedom of the Press in 1827, and it became apparent in the literature of the next decade that all young men of spirit were no longer anti-Jacobins—no longer even Whigs, but Radicals. The worship of the dead poet went side by side with the worship of the living. The writings of Shelley, especially after his long imprisonment, obtained a popularity which was one of the most curious symptoms of the time. His "*Men of England, wherefore plough?*" was sung at all Radical gatherings, and his ode on the death of Napoleon (*The Dead Anarch*, 1836) passed through twenty-five editions in a year. The younger literary stars, like Tennyson and Arthur Hallam, blazed with revolutionary ardour. Excluded from Oxford and Cambridge, the Dissenters and Radicals formed a University at Manchester, which soon almost monopolised the talent of the country. Meanwhile serious politicians like Lord John Russell and the irrepressible Mr. Brougham abandoned the older Whig creed and declared for Universal Suffrage. No wise man, in the year after Napoleon's death, would have foretold with confidence whether England was destined to tread the path of revolution or to continue in the beaten track of tyranny and obscurantism. At least, it was clear

that there was no longer any third way open to her, and that the coming era would be stained with blood and violence Whiggery died with Grey—that pathetic and futile figure, who had waited forty years in vain The English character was no longer one of compromise, it was being forced by foreign circumstances into another and more violent mould.

Similarly in the Continental States outside the limits of the Napoleonic Empire, the *ancien régime* was not only triumphant but to some extent popular and national, because the late persecutor of the German and Spanish peoples still remained as their dangerous neighbour, and was still by far the most powerful prince in Europe In Spain the Liberals and Freethinkers were extirpated with an efficiency which Torquemada might have approved, the Inquisition was indeed abolished in consequence of Napoleon's threat of war in 1833, a year in which the Tories were unable to give Spain diplomatic support, because the execution of the eccentric "gypsy-Englishman" for smuggling Bibles into Andalusia had raised a momentary storm among their Evangelical supporters in the House and country But the disappearance of the Inquisition made no real difference to the methods of Church and State in Spain, and the diplomatic incident only served, as it was intended, to restore the old Emperor's popularity with the French Liberals

Meanwhile the revolted Spanish colonies in South America continued their efforts for freedom with ever-increasing success until the interference of the English army, sent out by Government on pure anti-Jacobin principles, against the wish and the interest of the British merchants trading in those parts "We must preserve," said Castlereagh, "the balance between monarchy and Republicanism in the New World as in the Old" But not enough troops could be spared from policing the British Islands to do more than prolong the agony of the Transatlantic struggle The vast expanses of the Pampas became a permanent Field of Mars, where Liberal exiles and adventurers of all countries, principally English and Italian, side by side with the well-mounted Gauchos,

waged a ceaseless guerilla war on the English and Spanish regulars. Here Napier's brothers avenged his death on the army of which they had once been the ornaments, and Murat, riding-whip in hand, was seen at the head of many a gallant charge, leading on the Italians whose idol he had now become in either hemisphere. "The free life of the Pampas" became to the young men of Europe the symbol of that spiritual and political emancipation which could be realised only in exile and secured in rebellion and in war. Hence it is that the note of the Pampas is as prevalent as the note of Byron in the literature and art of that epoch.

In Germany the national hopes of union and liberty were cheated by the monarchs, who continued, however, to enjoy safety, prestige, and the bodyguard of those great standing armies which were necessary to secure French respect for the Rhine frontier. The reforms previously effected in those German States which had been either subject to Napoleon's rule or moved by his example, were permitted to remain, wherever they made for the strength of the monarchic principle. The Prussian peasants were not thrust back into serfdom, the reformed Civil Service was kept in some of the "Westphalian" States; the Act of Mediation and the Abolition of the Prince-Bishoprics were maintained for the benefit of the larger princes. But all traces of the Code Napoléon were abolished in Hesse-Cassel and Hanover, while the University and National movements were effectively suppressed throughout the Fatherland under Austrian influence, paramount since the failure of Blücher in Flanders and the deal between Metternich and Napoleon at the Conference of Vienna in 1815. If Prussia obtained nothing else, she recovered her share of Poland whose cries were smothered by the Christian Powers of the East as easily as Greece was put down by the Turk.

The only Germans who were at once contented and well governed were those on the left bank of the Rhine, who continued to be, in peace as in war, the quietest and most loyal of all Napoleon's subjects. The French were less easy to satisfy, they had, indeed, forced their lord to

make peace, but could they also compel him to grant that measure of liberty which they now claimed? The solution of that question would scarcely have been possible except by violent means had the Emperor retained half of his old health and vigour. But it was solved provisionally from year to year, because the energies of the autocrat decreased in almost exact proportion to the increase of his subjects' demand for freedom. He cared not who wielded powers which he was no longer in a condition to exercise himself, and was ready, out of sheer indifference, to hand them scornfully over to Ministers more or less in sympathy with the Chambers. So long as he could keep his own eye on the censorship, it was rigid, but when he became too ill to read anything except the most important despatches, the censorship was again as feebly administered as in the days of the last two Bourbons. Under these conditions of irritating but ineffectual repression, French literature and thought were stimulated into a life almost as flourishing as in the days of the Encyclopædists. The Romantic movement undermined the Imperial idea with the intellectuals, the "breath of the Pampas" was felt in the Quartier Latin. It was in vain that the police broke the busts of Byron and forbade plays in which the unities were violated.

Yet as long as Napoleon lived and let live the Liberals, the quarrel of the ruled against their ruler was but half serious. The movement towards a fresh revolution was rather a preparation for his death than a very deliberate disloyalty to the man who had saved France from the *ancien régime*. And whatever the workmen and students might think, the peasants and soldiers regarded the political and social condition of France after Mont St Jean as almost perfect. The soldiers were still the favourites of Government, the peasants at length tilled in peace and security the lands which their fathers had seized from the nobles and the clergy. The religion of the vast majority of Frenchmen was respected, but the priest was confined to the church, the home and the women belonged to the father of the family, and the school to the State.

Indeed, the chief cause of complaint against Napoleon's government, in the eyes of the majority of his subjects, was not political, social, or religious, but administrative. The executive machine at Paris, to which the life of the remotest hamlets was "mortised and adjoined," worked with an inefficiency resultant on the bad health of the autocrat. His personal attention to business became more and more irregular, and since the ineradicable tradition of the Imperial service was to wait upon his initiative, France was scarcely better governed from the Tuileries in 1820 than she had been in 1807 from the camp-fires of Poland.

In the treaty of Autumn 1815 the wily Metternich had succeeded, by a masterpiece of cunning, in retaining the Venetian territories for Austria as the price of abandoning at the conference the claims of Prussia to expansion in Germany. As in Northern Europe the Rhine, so in Italy the Mincio, became the geographic boundary between the Napoleonic system and the *ancien régime*—both as yet rather feebly threatened by the rising spirit of Italian nationality. Murat, who had by his recent conduct fairly sacrificed the goodwill of both parties, lost his kingdom and fled to South America. No one dared to propose to Napoleon the restoration of the temporal power of the Pope, it had, indeed, no more claim to recognition than that of the Prince-Bishops, whose recently secularised territories none of the German Princes proposed to restore. Sicily, protected by the British ships, remained to the House of Bourbon. From the moment that the signature of peace removed the fear of the French invasion, British influence waned at Palermo, and the old methods of Sicilian despotism returned. But the fact that the King of Sicily was obliged by the Powers to renounce all his claims to the throne of Naples stood him in good stead with his insular subjects, whose jealousy was appeased by this act of separation.

All the Italian Peninsula, except the territory of Venice, was subject to the unifying influence of the French Imperial system. The Code Napoléon, the encouragement of the middle class, the abeyance of clerical influence in govern-

ment and education in favour of military and official ideals, continued as before the peace. The Clerical and Liberal forces, still divided by the deadliest enmity, which would certainly break out in bloodshed if the foreigner were ever to be expelled from Italy, were alike hostile to the French. But, whereas the Clericals hoped to restore the *ancien régime*, either by extending the Austrian dominions or calling back the native Princes, and especially the Pope, the Liberals, on the other hand, dreamed of an Italian Republic. These two movements were represented to Italy and to the world, the one by the Prince of the House of Savoy, the hope of the reactionaries, and the other by the son of the Genoese doctor, the founder of the formidable "Società Savonarola," in which many of the rising generation hastened to enlist themselves. In 1832 both these romantic young men fell victims to Napoleon's police, Charles Albert was detected in disguise in Turin, and suffered the fate of the Duc d'Enghien. Mazzini, who had the year before escaped with difficulty from the Venetian Alps, where he had raised the national flag against Austria, attempted a rising against Napoleon in the streets of Genoa, but being opposed by the Italian soldiery, who found all that they wanted in the existing *régime*, was captured and shot, with twelve of his followers.

The executions of the Savoyard Prince and the Genoese prophet served to remind Europe that Napoleon, in his old age, still remained, as in his youth, the enemy alike of the *ancien régime* and of democratic liberty. Which of the two would be the chief gainer by his death it was impossible to predict.

On the evening of June 4, 1836, Napoleon was presiding, with even more than his habitual invalid's lethargy, at one of his Councils of State. The latest reports from Italy were presented, and a closer *entente* with the Austrian police was under discussion. The Emperor had been sitting, silent and distracted, his head sunk on his breast. Suddenly the word "Italy" penetrated to his consciousness. He looked up with fire in his eyes. "Italy!" he said, "we march to-morrow. The army of the Alps will deserve well of the Republic." Then, more distractedly,

he murmured. "I must leave Josephine behind. She will not care." He had often of late been talking thus of his first Empress, whom he seemed to imagine to be somewhere in the palace, but unwilling to see him. It was the custom of the Council, dictated by the physicians, to adjourn as soon as he mentioned her name. The Ministers therefore retired.

The rest of the story can best be told by M. Villebois, physician of the Imperial Household.

"While the Council sat I was walking in the Tuileries Gardens below. It was a hot and silent night of June. The city was at rest and the trees slept with her. Suddenly from the open window of the Council Chamber, a noise, inconceivably unmelodious, makes itself heard. I look up, and behold the Emperor standing alone at the balcony, with the lights behind him framing him like a picture. With the gestures of a wild animal just set free, he is intoning, in a voice of the most penetrating discord, the Revolutionary hymn of France, which he has forbidden under penalty of the law to the use of his subjects. But to him, I know it, it is not a hymn of revolution but a *chant du départ*. I rush upstairs, and find a group of Ministers and lackeys trembling outside the door. No one dares enter. 'Doctor,' said old Marshal —, 'he sang that cursed song like that the night before we crossed into Russia. On that occasion we stood in the room below and trembled, and one told me that he had sung it thus, in solitude, on the night before he first crossed into Italy.'

"Pushing past the brave old man, I opened the door and entered alone. The sound had now ceased, but the song had penetrated through the summer night, and in the Rue de Rivoli a drunken *ouvrier* had caught it up and was thundering it out. I looked round for my master, and did not at first see him. Suddenly I perceived that Napoleon was lying dead at my feet. I heard the oaths of the *ouvrier* as the police seized him under the arcade."



## XVI

### THE HAPPIEST OF THE POETS

By W B YEATS

#### I

ROSSSETTI in one of his letters numbers his favourite colours in the order of his favour, and throughout his work one feels that he loved form and colour for themselves and apart from what they represent. One feels sometimes that he desired a world of essences, of unmixed powers, of impossible purities. It is as though the last judgment had already begun in his mind and that the essences and powers, which the divine hand had mixed into one another to make the loam of life, fell asunder at his touch. If he painted a flame or a blue distance, he painted as though he had seen the flame out of whose heart all flames had been taken, or the blue of the abyss that was before all life, and if he painted a woman's face he painted it in some moment of intensity when the ecstasy of the lover and of the saint are alike, and desire becomes wisdom without ceasing to be desire. He listens to the cry of the flesh till it becomes proud and passes beyond the world where some immense desire that the intellect cannot understand mixes with the desire of a body's warmth and softness. His genius, like Shelley's, can hardly stir but to the rejection of nature, whose delight is profusion, but never intensity, and, like Shelley's, it follows the Star of the Magi, the Morning and Evening Star, the mother of impossible hope, although it follows through deep woods, where the Star glimmers among dew-drenched boughs, and not through "a wind-swept valley of the Apennine." Men like him cannot be happy as we understand happiness, for to be happy one

must delight, like nature, in mere profusion, in mere abundance, in making and doing things, and if one sets an image of the perfect before one it must be the image that draws her perpetually, the image of a perfect fulness of natural life, of an Earthly Paradise. One's emotions must never break the bonds of life, one's hands must never labour to loosen the silver cord, one's ears must never strain to catch the sound of Michael's trumpet. That is to say, one must not be among those that would have prayed in old times in some chapel of the Star, but among those who would have prayed under the shadow of the Green Tree, and on the wet stones of the Well, among the worshippers of natural abundance

## II

I do not think it was accident, so subtle are the threads that lead the soul, that made William Morris, who seems to me the one perfectly happy and fortunate poet of modern times, celebrate the Green Tree and the goddess Habundia, and wells and enchanted waters in so many books. In *The Well at the World's End* green trees and enchanted waters are shown to us, as they were understood by old writers, who thought that the generation of all things was through water, for when the water that gives a long and a fortunate life and that can be found by none but such a one as all women love is found at last, the Dry Tree, the image of the ruined land, becomes green. To him indeed, as to older writers, Well and Tree are all but images of the one thing, of an "energy" that is not the less "eternal delight" because it is half of the body. He never wrote, and could not have written, of a man or woman who was not of the kin of Well or Tree. Long before he had named either he had made his "Wanderers" follow a dream indeed, but a dream of natural happiness, and all the people of all his poems and stories, from the confused beginning of his art in *The Hollow Land* to its end in *The Sundering Flood*, are full of the heavy sweetness of this dream. He wrote indeed of nothing but of the quest of the Grail, but it was the Heathen Grail that gave every man his chosen food,

and not the Grail of Malory or Wagner, and he came at last to praise, as other men have praised the martyrs of religion or of passion, men with lucky eyes and men whom all women love

We know so little of man and of the world that we cannot be certain that the same invisible hands that gave him an imagination preoccupied with good fortune, gave him also health and wealth, and the power to create beautiful things without labour, that he might honour the Green Tree. It pleases me to imagine the copper mine which brought, as Mr Mackail has told, so much unforeseen wealth and in so astonishing a way, as no less miraculous than the three arrows in *The Sundering Flood*. No mighty poet in his misery dead could have delighted enough to make us delight in men "who knew no vain desire of foolish fame," but who thought the dance upon "the stubble field" and "the battle with the earth" better than "the bitter war" "where right and wrong are mixed together." "Oh, the trees, the trees!" he wrote in one of his early letters, and it was his work to make us, who had been taught to sympathise with the unhappy till we had grown morbid, to sympathise with men and women who turned everything into happiness because they had in them something of the abundance of the beechen boughs or of the bursting wheat-ear. He alone, I think, has told the story of Alcestis with perfect sympathy for Admetus, with so perfect a sympathy that he cannot persuade himself that one so happy died at all, and he, unlike all other poets, has delighted to tell us that the men after his own heart, the men of his *News from Nowhere*, sorrowed but a little while over unhappy love. He cannot even think of nobility and happiness apart, for all his people are like his men of Burg Dale who lived "in much plenty and ease of life, though not delicately or desiring things out of measure. They wrought with their hands and wearied themselves, and they rested from their toil and feasted and were merry, to-morrow was not a burden to them, nor yesterday a thing which they would fain forget, life shamed them not nor did death make them afraid. As for the Dale wherein they dwelt, it was indeed most fair and lovely and they deemed it the Blessing of the

earth, and they trod the flowery grass beside its rippled stream amidst the green tree-boughs proudly and joyfully with goodly bodies and merry hearts "

## III

I think of his men as with broad brows and golden beards and mild eyes and tranquil speech, and of his good women as like "The Bride" in whose face Rossetti saw and painted for once the abundance of earth, and not the half-hidden light of his star. They are not in love with love for its own sake, with a love that is apart from the world or at enmity with it, as Swinburne imagines Mary Stuart and as all men have imagined Helen. They do not seek in love that ecstasy which Shelley's nightingale called death, that extremity of life in which life seems to pass away like the Phoenix in flame of its own lighting, but rather a gentle self-surrender that would lose more than half its sweetness if it lost the savour of coming days. They are good housewives, they sit often at the embroidery frame, and they have wisdom in flocks and herds and they are before all fruitful mothers. It seems at times as if their love was less a passion for one man out of the world than submission to the hazard of destiny, and the hope of motherhood and the innocent desire of the body. They accept changes and chances of life as gladly as they accept spring and summer and autumn and winter, and because they have sat under the shadow of the Green Tree and drunk the Waters of Abundance out of their hollow hands, the barren blossoms do not seem to them the most beautiful. When Habundia takes the shape of Birdalone she comes first as a young naked girl standing among great trees, and then as an old carline, Birdalone in stately old age. And when she praises Birdalone's naked body, and speaks of the desire it shall awaken, praise and desire are innocent because they would not break the links that chain the days to one another. The desire seems not other than the desire of the bird for its mate in the heart of the wood, and we listen to that joyous praise as though a bird, watching its plumage in still water, had begun to sing in its joy, or as if we heard

hawk praising hawk in the middle air, and because it is the praise of one made for all noble life, and not for pleasure only, it seems, though it is the praise of the body, that it is the noblest praise

Birdalone has never seen her image but in a "broad latten-dish," so the wood woman must tell her of her body and praise it

"Thus it is with thee, thou standest before me a tall and slim maiden, somewhat thin as befitteth thy seventeen summers, where thy flesh is bare of wont, as thy throat and thine arms and thy legs from the middle down, it is tanned a beauteous colour, but elsewhere it is even as fair a white, wholesome, and clean as if the golden sunlight which fulfilleth the promise of the earth were playing therein

Delicate and clean-made is the little trench that goeth from thy mouth to thy lips, and sweet it is, and there is more might in it than in sweet words spoken Thy lips they are of the finest fashion, yet rather thin than full, and some would not have it so, but I would, whereas I see therein a sign of thy valancy and friendliness Surely he who did thy carven chin had a mind to a master work and did no less Great was the deftness of thy imaginer, and he would have all folk who see thee wonder at thy deep thinking and thy carefulness and thy kindness Ah, maiden! is it so that thy thoughts are ever deep and solemn? Yet at least I know it of thee that they be hale and true and sweet

"My friend, when thou hast a mirror, some of all this thou shalt see, but not all, and when thou hast a lover some deal wilt thou hear, but not all But now thy she-friend may tell it thee all, if she have eyes to see it, as have I, whereas no man could say so much of thee before the mere love should overtake him, and turn his speech into the folly of love and the madness of desire"

All his good women, whether it is Danaë in her tower, or that woman in *The Wood beyond the World* who can make the withered flowers in her girdle grow young again by the touch of her hand, are of the kin of the wood woman All his bad women too and his half-bad women are of her kin The evils their enchantments make are a disordered

abundance like that of weedy places and they are cruel as wild creatures are cruel and they have unbridled desires. One finds these evils in their typical shape in that isle of the Wondrous Isles, where the wicked witch has her pleasure-house and her prison, and in that "isle of the old and the young," where until her enchantment is broken second childhood watches over children who never grow old and who seem to the bystander who knows their story "like images" or like "the rabbits on the grass." It is as though Nature spoke through him at all times in the mood that is upon her when she is opening the apple-blossom or reddening the apple or thickening the shadow of the boughs, and that the men and women of his verse and of his stories are all the ministers of her mood.

## IV

When I was a child I often heard my elders talking of an old turreted house where an old great-uncle of mine lived, and of its gardens and its long pond where there was an island with tame eagles, and one day somebody read me some verses and said they made him think of that old house where he had been very happy. The verses ran in my head for years and became to me the best description of happiness in the world, and I am not certain that I know a better even now. They were those first dozen verses of *Golden Wings* that begin

"Midways of a walled garden  
In the happy poplar land  
Did an ancient castle stand,  
With an old knight for a warden.

Many scarlet bricks there were  
In its walls, and old grey stone;  
Over which red apples shone  
At the right time of the year

On the bricks the green moss grow,  
Yellow lichen on the stone,  
Over which red apples shone;  
Little war that castle knew."

When William Morris describes a house of any kind, and makes his description poetical, it is always, I think,

some house that he would have liked to have lived in, and I remember him saying about the time when he was writing of that great house of the Wolfings, "I decorate modern houses for people, but the house that would please me would be some great room where one talked to one's friends in one corner and eat in another and slept in another and worked in another." Indeed all he writes seems to me like the make-believe of a child who is remaking the world, not always in the same way, but always after its own heart, and so unlike all other modern writers, he makes his poetry, out of unending pictures of a happiness that is often what a child might imagine, and always a happiness that sets mind and body at ease. Now it is a picture of some great room full of merriment, now of the wine-press, now of the golden threshing-floor, now of an old mill among apple-trees, now of cool water after the heat of the sun, now of some well-sheltered, well-tilled place among woods or mountains, where men and women live happily, knowing of nothing that is too far off or too great for the affections. He has but one story to tell us, how some man or woman lost and found again the happiness that is always half of the body, and even when they are wandering from it, leaves must fall over them, and flowers make fragrances about them, and warm winds fan them, and birds sing to them, for, being of *Habundia's* kin, they must not forget the shadow of her Green Tree even for a moment, and the waters of her Well must be always wet upon their sandals. His poetry often wearies us as the unbroken green of July wearies us, for there is something in us, some bitterness because of the Fall it may be, that takes a little from the sweetness of Eve's apple after the first mouthful; but he who did all things gladly and easily, who never knew the curse of labour, found it always as sweet as it was in Eve's mouth. All kinds of associations have gathered about the pleasant things of the world and half taken the pleasure out of them for the greater number of men, but he saw them as when they came from the Divine Hand. I often see him in my mind as I saw him once at Hammer-smith looking to a glass of claret towards the light and saying, "Why do people say it is prosaic to get inspiration out of wine? Is

it not the sunlight and the sap in the leaves? Are not grapes made by the sunlight and the sap?"

## V

In one of his little socialist pamphlets, he tells how he sat under an elm-tree and watched the starlings and thought of an old horse and an old labourer that had passed him by, and of the men and women he had seen in towns; and he wondered how all these had come to be as they were. He saw that the starlings were beautiful and merry, and that men and the old horse they had subdued to their service were ugly and miserable, and yet the starlings, he thought, were of one kind, whether there or in the south of England, and the ugly men and women were of one kind with those whose nobility and beauty had moved the ancient sculptors and poets to imagine the gods and the heroes after the images of men. Then he began, he tells us, to meditate how this great difference might be ended, and a new life, which would permit men to have beauty in common among them, as the starlings have, be built on the wrecks of the old life. In other words, his mind was illuminated from within and lifted into prophecy in the full right sense of the word, and he saw the natural things he was alone gifted to see in their perfect form, and having that faith which is alone worth having, for it includes all others, a sure knowledge established in the constitution of his mind that perfect things are final things, he announced that all he had seen would come to pass. I do not think he troubled to understand books of economics, and Mr Mackail says, I think, that they vexed him and wearied him. He found it enough to hold up, as it were, life as it is to-day beside his visions, and to show how faded its colours were and how sapless it was. And if we had not enough artistic feeling, enough feeling for the perfect, that is, to admit the authority of the vision, or enough faith to understand that all that is imperfect passes away, he would not, as I think, have argued with us in a serious spirit. Though I think that he never used the kinds of words I use in writing of him, though I think he would even have disliked a word like faith,



with its theological associations, I am certain that he understood thoroughly, as all artists understand a little, that the important things, the things we must believe in or perish, are beyond argument. We can no more reason about them than can the pigeon, come but lately from the egg, about the hawk whose shadow makes it cower among the grass. His vision is true because it is poetical, because we are a little happier when we are looking at it, and he knew, as Shelley knew, by an act of faith that the economists should take their measurements not from life as it is, but from the vision of men like him, from the vision of the world made perfect that is buried under all minds. The early Christians were of the kin of the Wilderness and of the Dry Tree, and they saw an unearthly Paradise, but he was of the kin of the Well and of the Green Tree, and he saw an Earthly Paradise.

He obeyed his vision when he tried to make first his own house, for he was in this matter also like a child playing with the world, and then houses of other people, places where one could live happily, and he obeyed it when he wrote essays about the nature of happy work, and when he spoke at street corners about the coming changes.

He knew clearly what he was doing towards the end, for he lived at a time when poets and artists have begun again to carry the burdens that priests and theologians took from them angrily some few hundred years ago. His art was not more essentially religious than Rossetti's art, but it was different, for Rossetti, drunken with natural beauty, saw the supernatural beauty, the impossible beauty, in his frenzy, while he, being less intense and more tranquil, would show us a beauty that would wither if it did not set us at peace with natural things, and if we did not believe that it existed always a little, and would some day exist in its fulness. He may not have been, indeed he was not, among the very greatest of the poets, but he was among the greatest of those who prepare the last reconciliation when the Cross shall blossom with roses.

## XVII

### ANDREW LANG

By EDMUND W. GOSSE

INVITED to note down some of my recollections of Andrew Lang, I find myself suspended between the sudden blow of his death and the slow development of memory, now extending in unbroken friendship over thirty-five years. The magnitude and multitude of Lang's performances, public and private, during that considerable length of time almost paralyse expression, it is difficult to know where to begin or where to stop. Just as his written works are so extremely numerous as to make a pathway through them a formidable task in bibliography, no one book standing out predominant, so his character, intellectual and moral, was full of so many apparent inconsistencies, so many pitfalls for rash assertion, so many queer caprices of impulse, that in a whole volume of analysis, which would be tedious, one could scarcely do justice to them all. I will venture to put down, almost at haphazard, what I remember that seems to me to have been overlooked, or inaccurately stated, by those who wrote, often very sympathetically, at the moment of his death, always premising that I speak rather of a Lang of from 1877 to 1890, when I saw him very frequently, than of a Lang whom younger people met chiefly in Scotland.

When he died, all the newspapers were loud in proclaiming his "versatility." But I am not sure that he was not the very opposite of versatile. I take "versatile" to mean changeable, fickle, constantly ready to alter direction with the weather-cock. The great instance of versatility in literature is Ruskin, who adopted diametrically different views of the same subject at different times of his life, and

defended them with equal ardour To be versatile seems to be unsteady, variable But Lang was through his long career singularly unaltered, he never changed his point of view, what he liked and admired as a youth he liked and admired as an elderly man It is true that his interests and knowledge were vividly drawn along a surprisingly large number of channels, but while there was abundance there does not seem to me to have been versatility If huge body of water boils up from a crater, it may pour down a dozen paths, but these will always be the same, unless there is an earthquake, new cascades will not form nor old rivulets run dry In some authors earthquakes do take place—as in Tolstoy, for instance, and in S T Coleridge—but nothing of this kind was ever manifest in Lang, who was extraordinarily multi-form, yet in his varieties strictly consistent from Oxford to the grave As this is not generally perceived, I will take the liberty of expanding my view of his intellectual development

To a superficial observer in late life the genius of Andrew Lang had the characteristics which we are in the habit of identifying with precocity Yet he had not been, as a writer, precocious in his youth One slender volume of verses represents all that he published in book-form before his thirty-fifth year No doubt we shall learn in good time what he was doing before he flashed upon the world of journalism in all his panoply of graces, in 1876, at the close of his Merton fellowship He was then, at all events, the finest finished product of his age, with the bright armour of Oxford burnished on his body to such a brilliance that humdrum eyes could hardly bear the radiance of it Of the terms behind, of the fifteen years then dividing him from St Andrews, we know as yet but little, they were years of insatiable acquirement, incessant reading, and talking, and observing—gay preparation for a life to be devoted, as no other life in our time has been, to the stimulation of other people's observation and talk and reading There was no cloistered virtue about the bright and petulant Merton don He was already flouting and jesting, laughing with Ariosto in the sunshine, performing with a snap of his fingers tasks which might break the back

of a pedant, and concealing under an affectation of carelessness a literary ambition which knew no definite bounds

In those days, and when he appeared for the first time in London, the poet was paramount in him Jowett is said to have predicted that he would be greatly famous in this line, but I know not what evidence Jowett had before him Unless I am much mistaken, it was not until Lang left Balliol that his peculiar bent became obvious Up to that time he had been a promiscuous browser upon books, much occupied, moreover, in the struggle with ancient Greek, and immersed in Aristotle and Homer. But in the early days of his settlement at Merton he began to concentrate his powers, and I think there were certain influences which were instant and far-reaching Among them one was pre-eminent When Andrew Lang came up from St Andrews he had found Matthew Arnold occupying the ancient chair of poetry at Oxford He was a listener at some at least of the famous lectures which, in 1865, were collected as *Essays in Criticism*, while one of his latest experiences as a Balliol undergraduate was hearing Matthew Arnold lecture on the study of Celtic literature His conscience was profoundly stirred by *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), his sense of prose-form largely determined by *Friendship's Garland* (1871) I have no hesitation in saying that the teaching and example of Matthew Arnold prevailed over all other Oxford influences upon the intellectual nature of Lang, while, although I think that his personal acquaintance with Arnold was very slight, yet in his social manner there was, in early days, not a little imitation of Arnold's aloofness and superfine delicacy of address It was unconscious, of course, and nothing would have enraged Lang more than to have been accused of "imitating Uncle Matt"

The structure which his own individuality now began to build on the basis supplied by the learning of Oxford, and in particular by the study of the Greeks, and "dressed" by courses of Matthew Arnold, was from the first eclectic. Lang eschewed as completely what was not sympathetic to him as he assimilated what was attractive to him Those who speak of his "versatility" should recollect

what large tracts of the literature of the world, and even of England, existed outside the dimmest apprehension of Andrew Lang. It is, however, more useful to consider what he did apprehend, and there were two English books, published in his Oxford days, which permanently impressed him—one of these was *The Earthly Paradise*, the other D G Rossetti's *Poems*. In after years he tried to divest himself of the traces of these volumes, but he had fed upon their honey-dew and it had permeated his veins.

Not less important an element in the garnishing of a mind already prepared for it by academic and æsthetic studies was the absorption of the romantic part of French literature. Andrew Lang in this, as in everything else, was selective. He dipped into the wonderful lucky-bag of France wherever he saw the glitter of romance. Hence his approach, in the early seventies, was threefold: towards the mediæval *lais* and *chansons*, towards the sixteenth century Pléiade, and towards the school of which Victor Hugo was the leader in the nineteenth century. For a long time Ronsard was Lang's poet of intensest predilection, and I think that his definite ambition was to be the Ronsard of modern England, introducing a new poetical dexterity founded on a revival of pure humanism. He had in those days what he lost, or at least dispersed, in the weariness and growing melancholia of later years—a splendid belief in poetry as a part of the renown of England, as a heritage to be received in reverence from our fathers, and to be passed on, if possible, in a brighter flame. This honest and beautiful ambition to shine as one of the permanent benefactors to national verse, in the attitude so nobly sustained four hundred years ago by Du Bellay and Ronsard, was unquestionably felt by Andrew Lang through his bright intellectual April, and supported him from Oxford times until 1882, when he published *Helen of Troy*. The cool reception of that epic by the principal judges of poetry caused him acute disappointment, and from that time forth he became less eager and less serious as a poet, more and more petulantly expending his wonderful technical gift on fugitive subjects. And here again, when one comes to think of it, the whole history repeated itself, since in

*Helen of Troy* Lang simply suffered as Ronsard had done in the *Franciade*. But the fact that 1882 was his year of crisis, and the tomb of his brightest ambition, must be recognised by everyone who closely followed his fortunes at that time.

Lang's habit of picking out of literature and of life the plums of romance, and these alone, comes to be, to the dazzled observer of his extraordinarily vivid intellectual career, the principal guiding line. This determination to dwell, to the exclusion of all other sides of any question, on its romantic side is alone enough to rebut the charge of versatility. Lang was in a sense encyclopædic, but the vast dictionary of his knowledge had blank pages, or pages pasted down, on which he would not, or could not, read what experience had printed. Absurd as it sounds, there was always something maidenly about his mind, and he glossed over ugly matters, sordid and dull conditions, so that they made no impression whatever upon him. He had a trick, which often exasperated his acquaintances, of declaring that he had "never heard" of things that everybody else was very well aware of. He had "never heard the name" of people he disliked, of books that he thought tiresome, of events that bored him, but, more than this, he used the formula for things and persons whom he did not wish to discuss. I remember meeting in the street a famous professor, who advanced with uplifted hands, and greeted me with "What *do* you think Lang says now? That he has never heard of Pascal!" This merely signified that Lang, not interested (at all events for the moment) in Pascal nor in the professor, thus closed at once all possibility of discussion.

It must not be forgotten that we have lived to see him, always wonderful indeed, and always passionately devoted to perfection and purity, but worn, tired, harassed by the unceasing struggle, the life-long slinging of sentences from that inexhaustible ink-pot. In one of the most perfect of his poems, "Natural Theology," Lang speaks of Cagn, the great hunter, who once was kind and good, but who was spoiled by fighting many things. Lang was never "spoiled," but he was injured, the surface of the radiant coin was rubbed by the vast and interminable handling of

journalism. He was jaded by the toil of writing many things. Hence it is not possible but that those who knew him intimately in his later youth and early middle age should prefer to look back at those years when he was the freshest, the most exhilarating figure in living literature, when a star seemed to dance upon the crest of his already silvering hair. Baudelaire exclaimed of Théophile Gautier: "Homme heureux! homme digne d'envie! il n'a jamais aimé que le Beau!" and of Andrew Lang in those brilliant days the same might have been said. As long as he had confidence in beauty he was safe and strong, and much that, with all affection and all respect, we must admit was rasping and disappointing in his attitude to literature in his later years, seems to have been due to a decreasing sense of confidence in the intellectual sources of beauty. It is dangerous, in the end it must be fatal, to sustain the entire structure of life and thought on the illusions of romance. But that was what Lang did—he built his house upon the rainbow.

The charm of Andrew Lang's person and company was founded upon a certain lightness, an essential gentleness and elegance which were relieved by a sharp touch, just as a very dainty fruit may be preserved from mawkishness by something delicately acid in the rind of it. His nature was slightly inhuman, it was unwise to count upon its sympathy beyond a point which was very easily reached in social intercourse. If any simple soul showed an inclination, in eighteenth-century phrase, to "repose on the bosom" of Lang, that support was immediately withdrawn, and the confiding one fell among thorns. Lang was like an Angora cat, whose gentleness and soft fur, and general aspect of pure amenity, invite to caresses, which are suddenly met by the outspread paw with claws awake. This uncertain and freakish humour was the embarrassment of his friends, who, however, were preserved from despair by the fact that no malice was meant, and that the weapons were instantly sheathed again in velvet. Only, the instinct to give a sudden slap, half in play, half in fretful caprice, was incorrigible. No one among Lang's intimate friends but had suffered from this feline impulse, which did not

spare even the serenity of Robert Louis Stevenson. But, tiresome as it sometimes was, this irritable humour seldom cost Lang a friend who was worth preserving. Those who really knew him recognised that he was always shy and usually tired.

His own swift spirit never brooded upon an offence, and could not conceive that anyone else should mind what he himself minded so little and forgot so soon. Impressions swept over him very rapidly, and injuries passed completely out of his memory. Indeed, all his emotions were too fleeting, and in this there was something fairy-like, quick and keen and blithe as he was, he did not seem altogether like an ordinary mortal, nor could the appeal to gross human experience be made to him with much chance of success. This, doubtless, is why almost all imaginative literature which is founded upon the darker parts of life, all squalid and painful tragedy, all stories that "don't end well," all religious experiences, all that is not superficial and romantic, was irksome to him. He tried sometimes to reconcile his mind to the consideration of real life; he concentrated his matchless powers on it, but he always disliked it. He could persuade himself to be partly just to Ibsen or Hardy or Dostoeffsky, but what he really enjoyed was Dumas *père*, because that fertile romance-writer rose serene above the phenomena of actual human experience. We have seen more of this type in English literature than the Continental nations have in theirs, but even we have seen no instance of its strength and weakness so eminent as Andrew Lang. He was the fairy in our midst, the wonder-working, incorporeal, and tricky fay of letters, who paid for all his wonderful gifts and charms by being not quite a man of like passions with the rest of us. In some verses which he scribbled to R L S and threw away, twenty years ago, he acknowledged this unearthly character and, speaking of the depredations of his kin, he said

"Faith, they might steal me, wi' ma will,  
And, ken'd I ony Fairy hill,  
I'd lay me down there, snod and still,  
Their land to win;  
For, man, I've maistly had my fill  
O' this world's din."



His wit had something disconcerting in its impishness. Its rapidity and sparkle were dazzling, but it was not quite human, that is to say, it conceded too little to the exigencies of flesh and blood. If we can conceive a seraph being funny, it would be in the manner of Andrew Lang. Moreover, his wit usually danced over the surface of things, and rarely penetrated them. In verbal parry, in ironic misunderstanding, in breathless agility of topsy-turvy movement, Lang was like one of Milton's "yellow-skirted fays," sporting with the helpless, moon-bewildered traveller. His wit often had a depressing, a humiliating effect, against which one's mind presently revolted. I recollect an instance which may be thought to be apposite. I was passing through a phase of enthusiasm for Emerson, whom Lang very characteristically detested, and I was so ill-advised as to show him the famous epigram called "Brahma." Lang read it with a snort of derision (it appeared to be new to him), and immediately he improvised this parody

"If the wild bowler thinks he bowls,  
Or if the batsman thinks he's bowled,  
They know not, poor misguided souls,  
They, too, shall perish unconsolated  
*I am the batsman and the bat,  
I am the bowler and the ball,  
The umpire, the pavilion cat,  
The roller, pitch, and stumps, and all "*

This would make a pavilion cat laugh, and I felt that Emerson was done for. But when Lang had left me, and I was once more master of my mind, I reflected that the parody was but a parody, wonderful for its neatness and quickness, and for its seizure of what was awkward in the roll of Emerson's diction, but essentially superficial. However, what would wit be if it were profound? I must leave it there, feeling that I have not explained why Lang's extraordinary drollery in conversation so often left on the memory a certain sensation of distress.

But this was not the characteristic of his humour at its best, as it was displayed throughout the happiest period of his work. If, as seems possible, it is as an essayist that he

will ultimately take his place in English literature, this element will continue to delight fresh generations of enchanted readers. I cannot imagine that the preface to his translation of *Theocritus*, *Letters to Dead Authors*, *In the Wrong Paradise*, *Old Friends*, and *Essays in Little* will ever lose their charm, but future admirers will have to pick their way to them through a tangle of history and anthropology and mythology, where there may be left no perfume and no sweetness. I am impatient to see this vast mass of writing reduced to the limits of its author's delicate, true, but somewhat evasive and ephemeral genius. However, as far as the circumstances of his temperament permitted, Andrew Lang has left with us the memory of one of our most surprising contemporaries, a man of letters who laboured without cessation from boyhood to the grave, who pursued his ideal with indomitable activity and perseverance, and who was never betrayed except by the loftiness of his own endeavour. Lang's only misfortune was not to be completely in contact with life, and his work will survive exactly where he was most faithful to his innermost illusions.

## XVIII

### PATRIOTISM

(1915)

By W R Inge

(THE sentiment of patriotism has seemed to many to mark an arrest of development in the psychical expansion of the individual, a half-way house between mere self-centredness and full human sympathy) Some moralists have condemned it as pure egoism, magnified and disguised. "Patriotism," says Ruskin, "is an absurd prejudice founded on an extended selfishness" Mr Grant Allen calls it "a vulgar vice—the national or collective form of the monopolist instinct" Mr Havelock Ellis allows it to be "a virtue—among barbarians" For Herbert Spencer it is "a reflex egoism—extended selfishness" These critics have made the very common mistake of judging human emotions and sentiments by their roots instead of by their fruits They have forgotten the Aristotelian canon that the "nature" of anything is its completed development (*ἡ φύσις τέλος ἔστιν*) The human self, as we know it, is a transitional form It had a humble origin, and is capable of indefinite enhancement Ultimately, we are what we love and care for, and no limit has been set to what we may become without ceasing to be ourselves The case is the same with our love of country No limit has been set to what our country may come to mean for us, without ceasing to be our country Marcus Aurelius exhorted himself—"The poet says, Dear city of Cecrops, shall not I say, Dear city of God?" But the city of God in which he wished to be was a city in which he would still live as "a Roman and an Antonine" The

citizen of heaven knew that it was his duty to "hunt Sarmatians" on earth, though he was not obliged to imbrue his hands with "Cæsarism."

(Patriotism has two roots, the love of clan and the love of home) In migratory tribes the former alone counts, in settled communities diversities of origin are often forgotten. But the love of home, as we know it, is a gentler and more spiritual bond than clanship. The word home is associated with all that makes life beautiful and sacred, with tender memories of joy and sorrow, and especially with the first eager outlook of the young mind upon a wonderful world. A man does not as a rule feel much sentiment about his London house, still less about his office or factory. It is for the home of his childhood, or of his ancestors, that a man will fight most readily, because he is bound to it by a spiritual and poetic tie. Expanding from this centre, the sentiment of patriotism embraces one's country as a whole.

Both forms of patriotism—the local and the racial, are frequently alloyed with absurd, unworthy, or barbarous motives. The local patriot thinks that Peebles, and not Paris, is the place for pleasure, or asks whether any good thing can come out of Nazareth. To the Chinaman all aliens are "outer barbarians" or "foreign devils." Admiration for ourselves and our institutions is too often measured by our contempt and dislike for foreigners. Our own nation has a peculiarly bad record in this respect. In the reign of James I the Spanish ambassador was frequently insulted by the London crowd, as was the Russian ambassador in 1662, not, apparently, because we had a burning grievance against either of those nations, but because Spaniards and Russians are very unlike Englishmen. That at least is the opinion of the sagacious Pepys on the later of these incidents. "Lord! to see the absurd nature of Englishmen, that cannot forbear laughing and jeering at anything that looks strange." Defoe says that the English are "the most churlish people alive" to foreigners, with the result that "all men think an Englishman the devil." In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Scotland seems to have ranked as a foreign

country, and the presence of Scots in London was much resented. Cleveland thought it witty to write :

"Had Cain been Scot, God would have changed his doom;  
Not forced him wander, but confined him home"

And we all remember Dr Johnson's gibes. *John*

British patriotic arrogance culminated in the eighteenth and in the first half of the nineteenth century, in Lord Palmerston it found a champion at the head of the Government. Goldsmith describes the bearing of the Englishman of his day

"Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,  
I see the lords of human kind pass by"

Michelet found in England "human pride personified in a people," at a time when the characteristic of Germany was "a profound impersonality." It may be doubted whether even the arrogant brutality of the modern Prussian is more offensive to foreigners than was the calm and haughty assumption of superiority by our countrymen at this time. Our grandfathers and great-grandfathers were quite of Milton's opinion, that, when the Almighty wishes something unusually great and difficult to be done, He entrusts it to His Englishmen. This unamiable characteristic was probably much more the result of insular ignorance than of a deep-seated pride. "A generation or two ago," said Mr Asquith lately, "patriotism was largely fed and fostered upon reciprocal ignorance and contempt." The Englishman seriously believed that the French subsisted mainly upon frogs, while the Frenchman was equally convinced that the sale of wives at Smithfield was one of our national institutions. This fruitful source of international misunderstanding has become less dangerous since the facilities of foreign travel have been increased. But in the relations of Europe with alien and independent civilisations, such as that of China, we still see brutal arrogance and vulgar ignorance producing their natural results.

Another cause of pervverted patriotism is the inborn pugnacity of the bête humaine. Our species is the most cruel and destructive of all that inhabit this planet. If

the lower animals, as we call them, were able to formulate a religion, they might differ greatly as to the shape of the beneficent Creator, but they would nearly all agree that the devil must be very like a big white man. Mr McDougall<sup>1</sup> has lately raised the question whether civilised man is less pugnacious than the savage; and he answers it in the negative. The Europeans, he thinks, are among the most combative of the human race. We are not allowed to knock each other on the head during peace; but our civilisation is based on cut-throat competition; our favourite games are mimic battles, which I suppose effect for us a "purgation of the emotions" similar to that which Aristotle attributed to witnessing the performance of a tragedy and, when the fit seizes us, we are ready to engage in wars which cannot fail to be disastrous to both combatants. Mr. McDougall does not regret this disposition, irrational though it is. He thinks that it tends to the survival of the fittest, and that, if we substitute emulation for pugnacity, which on other grounds might seem an unmixed advantage, we shall have to call in the science of eugenics to save us from becoming as sheeplike as the Chinese. There is, however, another side to this question, as we shall see presently.

Another instinct which has supplied fuel to patriotism of the baser sort is that of acquisitiveness. This tendency, without which even the most rudimentary civilisation would be impossible, began when the female of the species, instead of carrying her baby on her back and following the male to his hunting-grounds, made some sort of a lair for herself and her family, where primitive implements and stores of food could be kept. There are still tribes in Brazil which have not reached this first step towards humanisation. But the instinct of hoarding, like all other instincts, tends to become hypertrophied and perverted, and with the institution of private property comes another institution—that of plunder and brigandage. In private life, no motive of action is at present so powerful and so persistent as acquisitiveness, which, unlike most other desires, knows no satiety. The average man is rich enough when he has a little more than he has got, and

<sup>1</sup> In his *Introduction to Social Psychology*.

not tall then. The acquisition and possession of land satisfies this desire in a high degree, since land is a visible and indestructible form of property. Consequently, as soon as the instincts of the individual are transferred to the group, territorial aggrandisement becomes a main pre-occupation of the state. This desire was the chief cause of wars, while kings and nobles regarded the territories over which they ruled as their private estates. Wherever despotic or feudal conditions survive, such ideas are likely still to be found, and to cause dangers to other states. The greatest ambition of a modern emperor is still to be commemorated as a "Mehrer des Reichs" *one who enlarges*.

Capitalism, by separating the idea of property from any necessary connection with landed estate, and democracy, by denying the whole theory on which dynastic wars of conquest are based, have both contributed to check this, perhaps the worst kind of war. It would, however, be a great error to suppose that the instinct of acquisitiveness, in its old and barbarous form, has lost its hold upon even the most civilised nations. When an old-fashioned brigand appears, and puts himself at the head of his nation, he becomes at once a popular hero. By any rational standard of morality, few greater scoundrels have lived than Frederick the Great and Napoleon I. But they are still names to conjure with. Both were men of singularly lucid intellect and entirely medieval ambitions. Their great achievement was to show how under modern conditions aggressive war may be carried on without much loss (except in human life) to the aggressor. They <sup>virtually</sup> tore up all the conventions which regulated the conduct of warfare, and reduced it to sheer brigandage and terrorism. And now, after a hundred years, we see these methods deliberately revived by the greatest military power in the world, and applied with the same ruthlessness and with an added pedantry which makes them more inhuman. The perpetrators of the crime calculated quite correctly that they need fear no reluctance on the part of the nation, no qualms of conscience, no compassionate shrinking, no remorse. It must, indeed, be a bad cause that cannot count on the support of the large majority of the people at the beginning.

of a war. Pugnacity, greed, mere excitement, the contagion of a crowd, will fill the streets of almost any capital with a shouting and jubilant mob on the day after a war has been declared.

And yet the motives which we have enumerated are plainly atavistic and pathological. They belong to a mental condition which would conduct an individual to the prison or the gallows. We do not argue seriously whether the career of the highwayman or burglar is legitimate and desirable, and it is impossible to maintain that what is disgraceful for the individual is creditable for the state. And apart from the consideration that predatory patriotism deforms its own idol and makes it hateful in the eyes of the world, subsequent history has fully confirmed the moral instinct of the ancient Greeks, that national insolence or injustice (*ὕβρις*) brings its own severe punishment. (The imaginary dialogue which Thucydides puts into the mouth of the Athenian and Melian envoys, and the debate in the Athenian Assembly about the punishment of revolted Mitylene, are intended to prepare the reader for the tragic fate of the Sicilian expedition.) The same writer describes the break-up of all social morality during the civil war in words which seem to herald the destruction not only of Athens, but of Greek freedom. Machiavelli's "Prince" shows how history can repeat itself, reiterating its lesson that a nation which gives itself to immoral aggrandisement is far on the road to disintegration. Seneca's rebuke to his slave-holding countrymen, "Can you complain that you have been robbed of the liberty which you have yourselves abolished in your own homes?" applies equally to nations which have enslaved or exploited the inhabitants of subject lands. If the Roman Empire had a long and glorious life, it was because its methods were liberal, by the standard of ancient times. In so far as Rome abused her power, she suffered the doom of all tyrants.

The illusions of imperialism have been made clearer than ever by the course of modern history. Attempts to destroy a nationality by overthrowing its government, proscribing its language, and maltreating its citizens, are



never successful The experiment has been tried with great thoroughness in Poland, and the Poles are now more of a nation than they were under the oppressive feudal system which existed before the partitions Our own empire would be a ludicrous failure if it were any part of our ambition to Anglicise other races The only English parts of the empire were waste lands which we have peopled with our own emigrants We hailed down the French flag in Canada, with the result that Eastern Canada is now the only flourishing French colony, and the only part of the world where the French race increases rapidly We have helped the Dutch to multiply with almost equal rapidity in South Africa We have added several millions to the native population of Egypt, and over a hundred millions to the population of India Similarly, the Americans have made Cuba for the first time a really Spanish island, by driving out its incompetent Spanish governors, and so attracting immigrants from Spain. On the whole, in imperialism nothing fails like success If the conqueror oppresses his subjects, they will become fanatical patriots, and sooner or later have their revenge, if he treats them well, and "governs them for their good," they will multiply faster than their rulers, till they claim their independence The Englishman now says, "I am quite content to have it so"; but that is not the old imperialism

The notion that frequent war is a healthy tonic for a nation is scarcely tenable Its dysgenic effect, by eliminating the strongest and healthiest of the population, while leaving the weaklings at home to be the fathers of the next generation, is no new discovery It has been supported by a succession of men, such as Tenon, Dufau, Foissac, de Lapouge, and Richet in France, Tiedemann and Seeck in Germany, Guerrini in Italy, Kellogg and Starr Jordan in America The case is indeed overwhelming The lives destroyed in war are nearly all males, thus disturbing the sex equilibrium of the population, they are in the prime of life, at the age of greatest fecundity, and they are picked from a list out of which from twenty to thirty per cent have been rejected for physical unfitness

It seems to be proved that the children born in France during the Napoleonic wars were poor and undersized—thirty millimetres below the normal height. War combined with religious celibacy to ruin Spain. "Castile makes men and wastes them," said a Spanish writer. "This sublime and terrible phrase sums up the whole of Spanish history," Schiller was right, "Immer der Krieg verschlingt die besten." We in England have suffered from this drain in the past; we shall suffer much more in the next generation.

"We have fed our sea for a thousand years,  
And she calls us, still unfed,  
Though there's never a wave of all her waves  
But marks our English dead

We have strawed our best to the weed's unrest,  
To the shark and the sheering gull,  
If blood be the price of admiralty,  
Lord God, we ha' paid in full"

Aggressive patriotism is thus condemned by common sense and the verdict of history no less than by morality. We are entitled to say to the militarists what Socrates said to Polus:

"This doctrine of yours has now been examined and found wanting. And this doctrine alone has stood the test—that we ought to be more afraid of doing than of suffering wrong; and that the prime business of every man [and nation] is not to seem good, but to be good, in all private and public dealings."

If the nations would render something more than lip-service to this principle, the abolition of war would be within sight, for, as Ruskin says, echoing the judgment of the Epistle of St James, "The first reason for all wars, and for the necessity of national defences, is that the majority of persons, high and low, in all European countries, are thieves." But it must be remembered that, in spite of the proverb, it takes in reality only one to make a quarrel. It is useless for the sheep to pass resolutions in favour of vegetarianism, while the wolf remains of a different opinion.

Our own conversion to pacificism, though sincere, is somewhat recent. Our literature does not reflect it. Bacon is frankly militarist :

" Above all, for empire and greatness, it importeth most, that a nation do profess arms, as their principal honour, study, and occupation. For the things which we formerly have spoken of are but habilitations towards arms, and what is habilitation without intention and act? . It is so plain that a man profiteth in that he most intendeth, that it needeth not to be stood upon. It is enough to point at it, that no nation, which doth not directly profess arms, may look to have greatness fall into their mouths "

A state, therefore, " ought to have those laws or customs, which may reach forth unto them just occasions of war " Shakespeare's *Henry V* has been not unreasonably recommended by the Germans as " good war-reading " It would be easy to compile a catena of bellicose maxims from our literature, reaching down to the end of the nineteenth century. The change is perhaps due less to progress in morality than to that political good sense which has again and again steered our ship through dangerous rocks. But there has been some real advance, in all civilised countries. We do not find that men talked about the " bankruptcy of Christianity " during the Napoleonic campaigns. Even the Germans think it necessary to tell each other that it was Belgium who began this war.

But, though pugnacity and acquisitiveness have been the real foundation of much mis-called patriotism, better motives are generally mingled with these primitive instincts. It is the subtle blend of noble and ignoble sentiment which makes patriotism such a difficult problem for the moralist. The patriot nearly always believes, or thinks he believes, that he desires the greatness of his country because his country stands for something intrinsically great and valuable. Where this conviction is absent we cannot speak of patriotism, but only of the cohesion of a wolf-pack. The Trecks, who at last perished because they could not combine, had nevertheless a consciousness that they were the rustees of civilisation against barbarism, and in their day of triumph over the Persians they were filled, for a time,

with an almost Jewish awe in presence of the righteous judgment of God. The "Persæ" of Æschylus is one of the noblest of patriotic poems. The Romans, a harder and coarser race, had their ideal of virtus and gravitas, which included simplicity of life, dignity and self-restraint, honesty and industry, and devotion to the state. They rightly felt that these qualities constituted a vocation to empire. There was much harshness and injustice in Roman imperialism, but what nobler epitaph could even the British Empire desire than the tribute of Claudian, when the weary Titan was at last stricken and dying

"Hæc est, in gremium victos quæ sola recepit,  
humanumque genus communi nomine fovit  
matris non dominæ ritu, civesque vocavit  
quos domuit, nexuque pio longinqua revinxit."

Jewish patriotism was of a different kind. A federation of fierce Bedouin tribes, encamped amid hostile populations, and set in the cockpit of rival empires against which it was impossible to stand, the Israelites were hammered by misfortune into the most indestructible of all organisms, a theocracy. Their religion was to them what, in a minor degree, Roman Catholicism has been to Ireland and Poland, a consecration of patriotic faith and hope. Westphal says the Jews failed because they hated foreigners more than they loved God. They have had good reason to hate foreigners. But undoubtedly the effect of their hatred has been that the great gifts which their nation had to give to humanity have come through other hands, and so have evoked no gratitude. In the first century of our era they were called to an almost superhuman abnegation of their inveterate nationalism, and they could not rise to it. As almost every other nation would have done, they chose the lower patriotism instead of the higher, and it was against their will that the religion of civilised humanity grew out of Hebrew soil. But they gained this by their choice, tragic though it was, that they have stood by the graves of all the empires that oppressed them, and have preserved their racial integrity and traditions in the most adverse circumstances. The history of the Jews

also shows that oppression and persecution are far more efficacious in binding a nation together than community of interest and national prosperity. Increase of wealth divides rather than unites a people, but suffering shared in common binds it together with hoops of steel

The Jews were the only race whose spiritual independence was not crushed by the Roman steam-roller. It would be unfair to say that Rome destroyed nations, for her subjects in the West were barbarous tribes, and in the East she displaced monarchies no less alien to their subjects than her own rule. But she prevented the growth of nationalities, as it is to be feared we have done in India, and the absence of sturdy independence in the countries round the Mediterranean, especially in the Greek-speaking provinces, made the final downfall inevitable. The lesson has its warning for modern theorists who wish to obliterate the sentiment of nationality, the revival of which, after a long eclipse, has been one of the achievements of modern civilisation. For it was not till long after the destruction of the Western Roman Empire that nationality began to assume its present importance in Europe.

The transition from medieval to modern history is most strongly marked by the emergence of this principle, with all that it involves. At the end of the Middle Ages Europe was at last compelled to admit that the grand idea of an universal state and an universal church had definitely broken down. Hitherto it had been assumed that behind all national disputes lay a ius gentium by which all were bound, and that behind all religious questions lay the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, from which there was no appeal. The modern period, which certainly does not represent the last word of civilisation, has witnessed the abandonment of these ideas. The change took place gradually. France became a nation when the English raids ceased in the middle of the fifteenth century. Spain achieved unity a generation later by the union of Castile and Aragon and the expulsion of the Moors from the peninsula. Holland found herself in the heroic struggle against Spain in the sixteenth century. But the practice of conducting wars by hiring foreign mercenaries, a sure

sign that the nationalist spirit is weak, continued till much later. And the dynastic principle, which is the very negation of nationalism, actually culminated in the eighteenth century, and this is the true explanation of the feeble resistance which Europe offered to the French revolutionary armies, until Napoleon stirred up the dormant spirit of nationalism in the peoples whom he plundered. "In the old European system," says Lord Acton, "the rights of nationalities were neither recognised by governments nor asserted by the people. The interests of the reigning families, not those of the nations, regulated the frontiers, and the administration was conducted generally without any reference to popular desires." Marriage or conquest might unite the most diverse nations under one sovereign, such as Charles V.

While such ideas prevailed, the suppression of a nation did not seem hateful, the partition of Poland evoked few protests at the time, though perhaps few acts of injustice have recoiled with greater force on the heads of their perpetrators than this is likely to do. Poles have been and are among the bitterest enemies of autocracy, and the strongest advocates of republicanism and racialism, in all parts of the world. The French Revolution opened a new era for nationalism, both directly and indirectly. The deposition of the Bourbons was a national act which might be a precedent for other oppressed peoples. And when the Revolution itself began to trample on the rights of other nations, an uprising took place, first in Spain and then in Prussia, which proved too strong for the tyrant. The apostasy of France from her own ideals of liberty proved the futility of mere doctrines, like those of Rousseau, and compelled the peoples to arm themselves and win their freedom by the sword. The national militarism of Prussia was the direct consequence of her humiliation at Jena and Auerstädt, and of the harsh terms imposed upon her at Tilsit. It is true that the Congress of Vienna attempted to revive the old dynastic system. But for the steady opposition of England, the clique of despots might have reimposed the old yoke upon their subjects. The settlement of 1815 also left the entire centre of Europe

in a state of chaos, and it was only by slow degrees that Italy and Germany attained national unity. Poland, the Austrian Empire, and the Balkan States still remain in a condition to trouble the peace of the world. In Austria-Hungary the clash of the dynastic and the nationalist ideas is strident, and every citizen of that empire has to choose between a wider and a narrower allegiance.

Europeans are, in fact, far from having made up their minds as to what is the organic whole towards which patriotic sentiment ought to be directed. Socialism agrees with despotism in saying, "It is the political aggregate, the state," however much they may differ as to how the state should be administered. For this reason militarism and state-socialism might at any time come to terms. They are at one in exaggerating the "organic" unity of a political or geographical enclave, and they are at one in depreciating the value of individual liberty. Loyalty to "the state" instead of to "king and country" is not an easy or a natural emotion. The state is a bloodless abstraction, which as a rule only materialises as a drill-sergeant or a tax-collector. Enthusiasm for it, and not only for what can be got out of it, does not extend much beyond the Fabian Society. Caesarism has the great advantage of a visible head, as well as of its appeal to very old and strong thought-habits, and accordingly, in any national crisis, loyalty to the War-lord is likely to show unexpected strength, and doctrinaire socialism unexpected weakness.

But devotion to the head of the state in his representative capacity is a different thing from the old feudal loyalty. It is far more impersonal; the ruler, whether an individual or a council, is revered as a non-human and non-moral embodiment of the national power, a sort of Platonic idea of coercive authority. This kind of loyalty may very easily be carried too far. In reality, we are members of a great many "social organisms," each of which has infeasible claims upon us. Our family, our circle of acquaintance, our business or profession, our church, our country, the comity of civilised nations, humanity at large, are

all social organisms, and some of the chief problems of ethics are concerned with the adjustment of their conflicting claims. To make any one of these absolute is destructive of morality. But militarism and socialism deliberately make the state absolute. In internal affairs this may lead to the ruthless oppression of individuals or whole classes; in external relations it produces wars waged with "methods of barbarism." The whole idea of the state as an organism, which has been emphasised by social reformers as a theoretical refutation of selfish individualism, rests on the abuse of a metaphor. The bond between the dwellers in the same political area is far less close than that between the organs of a living body. Every man has a life of his own, and some purely personal rights; he has, moreover, moral links with other human associations, outside his own country, and important moral duties towards them. No one who reflects on the solidarity of interests among capitalists, among hand-workers, or, in a different way, among scholars and artists, all over the world, can fail to see that the apotheosis of the state, whether in the interest of war or of revolution, is an anachronism and an absurdity.

A very different basis for patriotic sentiment is furnished by the scientific or pseudo-scientific theories about race, which have become very popular in our time. When the history of ideas in the twentieth century comes to be written, it is certain that among the causes of this great war will be named the belief of the Germans in the superiority of their own race, based on certain historical and ethnological theories which have acted like a heady wine in stimulating the spirit of aggression among them. The theory, stated briefly, is that the shores of the Baltic are the home of the finest human type that has yet existed, a type distinguished by blond hair, great physical strength, unequalled mental vigour and ability, superior morality, and an innate aptitude for governing and improving inferior races. Unfortunately for the world, this noble stock cannot flourish for very long in climates unlike its own, but from the earliest historical times it has "swarmed" periodically, subjugating the feebler peoples of the south, and elevating



them for a time above the level which they were naturally fitted to reach. Wherever we find marked energy and nobleness of character, we may suspect Aryan blood; and history will usually support our surmise. Among the great men who were certainly or probably Germans were Agamemnon, Julius Cæsar, the Founder of Christianity, Dante, and Shakespeare. The blond Nordic giant is fulfilling his mission by conquering and imposing his culture upon other races. They ought to be grateful to him for the service, especially as it has a sacrificial aspect, the lower types having, at least in their own climates, greater power of survival.

This fantastic theory has been defended in a large number of German books, of which the *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, by the renegade Englishman Houston Chamberlain, is the most widely known. The objections to it are numerous. It is notorious that until the invention of gunpowder the settled and civilised peoples of Europe were in frequent danger from bands of hardier mountaineers, forest-dwellers, or pastoral nomads, who generally came from the north. But the formidable fighting powers of these marauders were no proof of intrinsic superiority. In fact, the most successful of these conquerors, if success is measured by the amount of territory overrun and subdued, were not the "great blond beasts" of Nietzsche, but yellow monsters with black hair, the Huns and Tartars<sup>1</sup>. The causes of Tartar ascendancy had not the remotest connection with any moral or intellectual qualities which we can be expected to admire. Nor can the Nordic race, well endowed by nature as it undoubtedly is, prove such a superiority as this theory claims for it. Some of the largest brains yet measured have been those of Japanese; and the Jews have probably a higher average of ability than the Teutons. Again, the Germans are not descended from a pure Nordic stock. The Northern type can be best studied in Scandinavia, where the people share with the Irish the distinction of being the handsomest

<sup>1</sup> The reasons of their irresistible strength have been explained in a most brilliant manner by Dr Polsker in the first volume of the *Cambridge Medieval History*.

race in the world The German is a mixture of various anatomical types, including, in some parts, distinct traces of Mongolian blood, which indicate that the raiding Huns meddled, according to their custom, with the German women, and bequeathed to a section of the nation the Turanian cheek-bones, as well as certain moral characteristics Lastly, the German race has never shown much aptitude for governing and assimilating other peoples The French, by virtue of their greater sympathy, are far more successful

The French have their own form of this pseudo-science in their doctrine of the persistence of national characteristics Each nation may be summed up in a formula. England, for example, is "the country of will" A few instances may, no doubt, be quoted in support of this theory Julius Caesar said. "*Duas res plerasque Gallia industriosissime prosequitur, rem militarem et argute loqui*"; and these are still the characteristics of our gallant allies And Madame de Staël may be thought to have hit off the German character very cleverly about the time when Bismarck first saw the light "The Germans are vigorously submissive They employ philosophical reasonings to explain what is the least philosophic thing in the world, respect for force and the fear which transforms that respect into admiration" But the fact remains that the characters of nations frequently change, or rather that what we call national character is usually only the policy of the governing class, forced upon it by circumstances, or the manner of living which climate, geographical position, and other external causes have made necessary for the inhabitants of a country

To found patriotism on homogeneity of race is no wiser than to bound it by frontier lines As the Abbé Noel has lately written about his own country, Belgium, "the race is not the nation The nation is not a physiological fact, it is a moral fact What constitutes a nation is the community of sentiments and ideals which results from a common history and education The variations of the cephalic index are here of no great importance The essential factor of the national consciousness resides in a

certain common mode of conceiving the conditions of the social life "

Belgium, the Abbé maintains, has found this national consciousness amid her sufferings; there are no longer any distinctions between French-speaking Belgians and Walloons or Flemings. This is in truth the real base of patriotism. It is the basis of our own love for our country. What Britain stands for is what Britain is. We have long known in our hearts what Britain stands for, but we have now been driven to search our thoughts and make our ideals explicit to ourselves and others. The Englishman has become a philosopher *malgré lui*, "Whatever the world thinks," writes Bishop Berkeley, "he who hath not much meditated upon God, the human soul, and the *summum bonum*, may possibly make a thriving earthworm, but will most indubitably make a sorry patriot and a sorry statesman." These words, which were quoted by Mr Arthur Balfour a few years ago, may seem to make a large demand on the average citizen, but in our quiet way we have all been meditating on these things since last August, and we know pretty well what our *summum bonum* is for our country. We believe in chivalry and fair play and kindness—these things first and foremost, and we believe, if not exactly in democracy, yet in a government under which a man may think and speak the thing he wills. We do not believe in war, and we do not believe in bullying. We do not flatter ourselves that we are the supermen, but we are convinced that the ideas which we stand for, and which we have on the whole tried to carry out, are essential to the peaceful progress and happiness of humanity, and for these ideas we have drawn the sword. The great words of Abraham Lincoln have been on the lips of many and in the hearts of all since the beginning of the great contest. "With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right—let us strive on to finish the work we are in."

Patriotism thus spiritualised and moralised is the true patriotism. When the emotion is once set in its right relations to the whole of human life and to all that makes

human life worth living, it cannot become an immoral obsession. It is certain to become an immoral obsession if it is isolated and made absolute. We have seen the appalling perversion—the methodical diabolism—which this obsession has produced in Germany. It has startled us because we thought that the civilised world had got beyond such insanity, but it is of course no new thing. Machiavelli said, “I prefer my country to the salvation of my soul”—a sentiment which sounds noble but is not, it has only a superficial resemblance to St Paul’s willingness to be “accursed” for the sake of his countrymen. Devil-worship remains what it was, even when the idol is draped in the national flag. This obsession may be in part a survival from savage conditions, when all was at stake in every feud, but chiefly it is an example of the idealising and universalising power of the imagination, which turns every unchecked passion into a monomania. The only remedy is, as Lowell’s Hosea Biglow reminds us, to bear in mind that “our true country is that ideal realm which we represent to ourselves under the names of religion, duty, and the like. Our terrestrial organisations are but far-off approaches to so fair a model, and all they are verily traitors who resist not any attempt to divert them from this their original intendment. Our true country is bounded on the north and the south, on the east and west, by Justice, and when she oversteps that invisible boundary-line by so much as a hair’s breadth, she ceases to be our mother, and chooses rather to be looked upon *quasi noverca*.” So Socrates said that the wise man will be a citizen of his true city, of which the type is laid up in heaven, and only conditionally of his earthly country.

The obsession of patriotism is not the only evil which we have to consider. We may err by defect as well as by excess. Herbert Spencer speaks of an “anti-patriotic bias”; and it can hardly be disputed that many Englishmen who pride themselves on their lofty morality are suffering from this mental twist. The malady seems to belong to the Anglo-Saxon constitution, for it is rarely encountered in other countries, while we had a noisy pro-Napoleonic faction a hundred years ago, and the Americans

had their "Copperheads" in the Northern States during the civil war. In our own day, every enemy of England, from the mad Mullah to the mad Kaiser, has had his advocates at home, and the champions of Boer and Boxer, of Afridi and Afrikander, of the Mahdi and the Matabele, have been usually the same persons. The English, it would appear, differ from other misguided rascals in never being right even by accident. But the idiosyncrasy of a few persons is far less important than the comparative insensibility of whole classes to the patriotic appeal, except when war is actually raging. This is not specially characteristic of our own country. The German Emperor has complained of his Social Democrats as "people without a fatherland", and the cry "*À bas la patrie*" has been heard in France.

It is usual to explain this attitude by the fact that the manual workers "have no stake in the country," and might not find their condition altered for the worse by subjection to a foreign power. A few of our working-men have given colour to this charge by exclaiming petulantly that they could not be worse off under the Germans, but in this they have done themselves and their class less than justice. The anti-militarism and cosmopolitanism of the masses in every country is a profoundly interesting fact, a problem which demands no superficial investigation. It is one result of that emancipation from traditional ideas which makes the most important difference between the upper and middle classes on the one side and the lower on the other. We lament that the working-man takes but little interest in Christianity, and rack our brains to discover what we have done to discredit our religion in his eyes. The truth is that Christianity, as a dogmatic and ecclesiastical system, is unintelligible without a very considerable knowledge of the conditions under which it took shape. But what are the ancient Hebrews, and the Greeks and Romans, to the working-man? He is simply cut off from the means of reading intelligently any book of the Bible, or of understanding how the institution called the Catholic Church, and its offshoots, came to exist. As our staple education

becomes more "modern" and less literary, the custodians of organised religion will find their difficulties increasing. But the same is true about patriotism. Love of country means pride in the past and ambition for the future. Those who live only in the present are incapable of it. But our working-man knows next to nothing about the past history of England, he has scarcely heard of our great men, and has read few of our great books. It is not surprising that the appeal to patriotism leaves him cold. This is an evil that has its proper remedy. There is no reason why a sane and elevated love of country should not be stimulated by appropriate teaching in our schools. In America this is done—rather hysterically; and in Germany—rather brutally. The Jews have always made their national history a large part of their education, and even of their religion. Nothing has helped them more to retain their self-consciousness as a nation. Ignorance of the past and indifference to the future usually go together. Those who most value our historical heritage will be most desirous to transmit it unimpaired.

But the absence of traditional ideas is by no means an unmixed evil. The working-man sees more clearly than the majority of educated persons the absurdity of international hatred and jealousy. He is conscious of greater solidarity with his own class in other European countries than with the wealthier class in his own, and as he approaches the whole question without prejudice, he cannot fail to realise how large a part of the product of labour is diverted from useful purposes by modern militarism. International rivalry is in his eyes one of the most serious obstacles to the abolition of want and misery. Tolstoy hardly exaggerates when he says. "Patriotism to the peoples represents only a frightful future, the fraternity of nations seems an ideal more and more accessible to humanity, and one which humanity desires." Military glory has very little attraction for the working-man. His humanitarian instincts appear to be actually stronger than those of the sheltered classes. To take life in any circumstances seems to him a shocking thing; and the harsh procedure of martial law and military custom is abhorrent.

to him. He sees no advantage and no credit in territorial aggrandisement, which he suspects to be prompted mainly by the desire to make money unjustly. He is therefore a convinced pacifist, though his doctrine of human brotherhood breaks down ignominiously when he finds his economic position threatened by the competition of cheap foreign labour. If an armed struggle ever takes place between the nations of Europe (or their colonists) and the yellow races, it will be a working-man's war. But on the whole, the best hope of getting rid of militarism may lie in the growing power of the working class. The poor, being intensely gregarious and very susceptible to all collective emotions, are still liable to fits of warlike excitement. But their real minds are at present set against an aggressive foreign policy, without being shut against the appeals of a higher patriotism.

And yet the irritation which is felt against preachers of the brotherhood of man is not without justification. Some persons who condemn patriotism are simply lacking in public spirit, or their loyalty is monopolised by some fad or "cause," which is a poor substitute for love of country. The man who has no prejudices in favour of his own family and his own country is generally an unamiable creature. So we need not condemn Molière for saying, "*L'ami du genre humain n'est pas du tout mon fait*," nor Brunetière for declaring that "*Ni la nature ni l'histoire n'ont en effet voulu que les hommes fussent tous frères*." But French Neo-catholicism, a bourgeois movement directed against all the "ideas of 1789," seems to have adopted the most ferocious kind of chauvinism. M. Paul Bourget wrote the other day in the *Echo de Paris*, "The war must be the first of many, since we cannot exterminate sixty-five million Germans in a single campaign!" The women and children too! This is not the way to revive the religion of Christ in France.

The practical question for the future is whether there is any prospect of returning, under more favourable auspices, to the unrealised ideal of the Middle Ages—an agreement among the nations of Europe to live amicably under one system of international law and right, binding upon

all, and with the consciousness of an intellectual and spiritual unity deeper than political divisions ("The nations are the citizens of humanity," said Mazzini, and so they ought to be. Some of the omens are favourable (Militarism has dug its own grave). The Great Powers increased their armaments till the burden became insupportable, and have now rushed into bankruptcy in the hope of shaking it off. In prehistoric times the lords of creation were certain gigantic lizards, protected by massive armour-plates which could only be carried by a creature thirty to sixty feet long. Then they died, when neither earth, air, nor water could support them any longer. Such must be the end of the European nations, unless they learn wisdom. The lesson will be brought home to them by Transatlantic competition. The United States of America had already, before this war, an initial advantage over the disunited states of Europe, amounting to at least 10 per cent on every contract; after the war this advantage will be doubled. It remains to be seen whether the next generation will honour the debts which we are piling up. Disraeli used to complain of what he called "Dutch finance," which consists in "mortgaging the industry of the future to protect property in the present." Pitt paid for the great war of a hundred years ago in this manner, after a century we are still groaning under the burden of his loans. We may hear more of the iniquity of "Dutch finance" when the democracies of the next generation have a chance of repudiating obligations which, as they will say, they did not contract. However that may be, international rivalry is plainly very bad business, and there are great possibilities in the Hague Tribunal, if, and only if, the signatories to the conference bind themselves to use force against a recalcitrant member. The conduct of Germany in this war has shown that public opinion is powerless to restrain a nation which feels strong enough to defy it.

Another cause which may give patriots leisure to turn their thoughts away from war's alarms is that the "swarming" period of the European races is coming to an end. The unparalleled increase of population in the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century has been followed by a progressive



decrease in the birth-rate, which will begin to tell upon social conditions when the reduction in the death-rate, which has hitherto kept pace with it, shall have reached its natural limit. Europe with a stationary population will be in a much happier condition, and problems of social reform can then be tackled with some hope of success. Honourable emulation in the arts of life may then take the place of desperate competition and antagonism. Human lives will begin to have a positive value, and we may even think it fair to honour our saviours more than our destroyers. The effects of past follies will then soon be effaced; for nations recover much more quickly from wars than from internal disorders. External injuries are rapidly cured, but "those wounds heal ill that men do give themselves." The greatest obstacle to progress is not man's inherited pugnacity, but his incorrigible tendency to parasitism. The true patriot will keep his eye fixed on this, and will dread as the state's worst enemies those citizens who at the top and bottom of the social scale have no other ambition than to hang on and suck the life-blood of the nation. Great things may be hoped from the new science of eugenics, when it has passed out of its tentative and experimental stage.

In the distant future we may reasonably hope that patriotism will be a sentiment like the loyalty which binds a man to his public school and university, an affection purged of all rancour and jealousy, a stimulus to all honourable conduct and noble effort, a part of the poetry of life. It is so already to many of us, and has been so to the noblest Englishmen since we have had a literature. If Henry V's speech at Agincourt is the splendid gasconade of a royal freebooter, there is no false ring in the scene where John of Gaunt takes leave of his banished son, nor in Sir Walter Scott's "Breathes there a man with soul so dead," etc. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." We cannot quite manage to substitute London for Zion in singing psalms, though there are some places in England—Eton, Winchester, Oxford, Cambridge—which do evoke these feelings. These emotions of loyalty and devotion are by no means to be checked or despised.

They have an infinite potency for good. In spiritual things there is no conflict between intensity and expansion. The deepest sympathy is, potentially, also the widest. He who loves not his home, and country which he has seen, how shall he love humanity in general, which he has not seen! There are, after all, few emotions of which one has less reason to be ashamed than the little lump in the throat which the Englishman feels when he first catches sight of the white cliffs of Dover.

XIX  
*consider*  
(SIMPLICITY) AND TOLSTOY

By G. K. CHESTERTON

THE whole world is certainly heading for a great simplicity, not deliberately, but rather inevitably. It is not a mere fashion of false innocence, like that of the French aristocrats before the Revolution, who built an altar to Pan, and who taxed the peasantry for the enormous expenditure which is needed in order to live the simple life of peasants. The simplicity towards which the world is driving is the necessary outcome of all our systems and speculations and of our deep and continuous contemplation of things. For the universe is like everything in it: we have to look at it repeatedly and habitually before we see it. It is only when we have seen it for the hundredth time that we see it for the first time. The more consistently things are contemplated, the more they tend to unify themselves and therefore to simplify themselves. The simplification of anything is always sensational. Thus monotheism is the most sensational of things: it is as if we gazed long at a design full of disconnected objects, and, suddenly, with a stunning thrill, they came together into a huge and staring face.

Few people will dispute that all the typical movements of our time are upon this road towards simplification. Each system seeks to be more fundamental than the other, each seeks, in the literal sense, to undermine the other. In art, for example, the old conception of man, classic as the Apollo Belvedere, has first been attacked by the realist, who asserts that man, as a fact of natural history, is a creature with colourless hair and a freckled face. Then comes the Impressionist, going yet deeper, who asserts

that to his physical eye, which alone is certain, man is a creature with purple hair and a grey face. Then comes the Symbolist, and says that to his soul, which alone is certain, man is a creature with green hair and a blue face. And all the great writers of our time represent in one form or another this attempt to re-establish communication with the elemental, or, as it is sometimes more roughly and fallaciously expressed (to return to nature.) Some think that the return to nature consists in drinking no wine, some think that it consists in drinking a great deal more than is good for them. Some think that the return to nature is achieved by beating swords into ploughshares, some think it is achieved by turning ploughshares into very ineffectual British War Office bayonets. It is natural, according to the Jingo, for a man to kill other people with gunpowder and himself with gin. It is natural, according to the humanitarian revolutionist, to kill other people with dynamite and himself with vegetarianism. It would be too obviously Philistine a sentiment, perhaps, to suggest that the claim of either of these persons to be obeying the voice of nature is interesting when we consider that they require huge volumes of paradoxical argument to persuade themselves or anyone else of the truth of their conclusions. But the giants of our time are undoubtedly alike in that they approach by very different roads this conception of the return to simplicity. Ibsen returns to nature by the angular exterior of fact, Maeterlinck by the eternal tendencies of fable. Whitman returns to nature by seeing how much he can accept, Tolstoy by seeing how much he can reject.

Now, this heroic desire to return to nature is, of course, in some respects, rather like the heroic desire of a kitten to return to its own tail. A tail is a simple and beautiful object, rhythmic in curve and soothing in texture, but it is certainly one of the minor but characteristic qualities of a tail that it should hang behind. It is impossible to deny that it would in some degree lose its character if attached to any other part of the anatomy. Now, nature is like a tail in the sense that it is vitally important if it is to discharge its real duty that it should be always behind. To

imagine that we can see nature, especially our own nature, face to face is a folly, it is even a blasphemy. It is like the conduct of a cat in some mad fairy-tale, who should set out on his travels with the firm conviction that he would find his tail growing like a tree in the meadows at the end of the world. And the actual effect of the travels of the philosopher in search of nature when seen from the outside looks very like the gyrations of the tail-pursuing kitten, exhibiting much enthusiasm but little dignity, much cry and very little tail. The grandeur of nature is that she is omnipotent and unseen, that she is perhaps ruling us most when we think that she is heeding us least. "Thou art a God that hidest Thyself," said the Hebrew poet. It may be said with all reverence that it is behind a man's back that the spirit of nature hides.

It is this consideration that lends a certain air of fatality even to all the inspired simplicities and thunderous veracities of Tolstoy. We feel that a man cannot make himself simple merely by warring on complexity, we feel, indeed, in our saner moments that a man cannot make himself simple at all. A self-conscious simplicity may well be far more intrinsically ornate than luxury itself. Indeed, a great deal of the pomp and sumptuousness of the world's history was simple in the truest sense. It was born of an almost babyish receptiveness, it was the work of men who had eyes to wonder and men who had ears to hear.

"King Solomon brought merchant men,  
Because of his desire,  
With peacocks, apes and ivory,  
From Tarshish unto Tyre"

But this proceeding was not a part of the wisdom of Solomon, it was a part of his folly—I had almost said of his innocence. Tolstoy, we feel, would not be content with hurling satire and denunciation at "Solomon in all his glory." With fierce and unimpeachable logic he would go a step further. He would spend days and nights in the meadows stripping the shameless crimson coronals off the lilies of the field.

The new collection of *Tales from Tolstoy*, translated and

edited by Mr. R. Nisbet Bam, is calculated to draw particular attention to this ethical and ascetic side of Tolstoy's work. In one sense, and that the deepest sense, the work of Tolstoy is, of course, a genuine and noble appeal to simplicity. The narrow notion that an artist may not teach is pretty well exploded by now. But the truth of the matter is, that an artist teaches far more by his mere background and properties, his landscape, his costume, his idiom and technique—all the part of his work, in short, of which he is probably entirely unconscious, than by the elaborate and pompous moral dicta which he fondly imagines to be his opinions. The real distinction between the ethics of high art and the ethics of manufactured and didactic art lies in the simple fact that the bad fable has a moral, while the good fable is a moral. And the real moral of Tolstoy comes out constantly in these stories, the great moral which lies at the heart of all his work, of which he is probably unconscious, and of which it is quite likely that he would vehemently disapprove. The curious cold white light of morning that shines over all the tales, the folklore simplicity with which "a man or a woman" are spoken of without further identification, the love—one might almost say the lust—for the qualities of brute materials, the hardness of wood, and the softness of mud, the ingrained belief in a certain ancient kindness sitting beside the very cradle of the race of man—these influences are truly moral. When we put beside them the trumpeting and tearing nonsense of the didactic Tolstoy, screaming for an obscene purity, shouting for an inhuman peace, hacking up human life into small sins with a chopper, sneering at men, women, and children out of respect to humanity, combining in one chaos of contradictions an unmanly Puritan and an uncivilised prig, then, indeed, we scarcely know whither Tolstoy has vanished. We know not what to do with this small and noisy moralist who is inhabiting one corner of a great and good man.

It is difficult in every case to reconcile Tolstoy the great artist with Tolstoy the almost venomous reformer. It is difficult to believe that a man who draws in such noble outlines the dignity of the daily life of humanity regards as evil that divine act of procreation by which that dignity is

renewed from age to age It is difficult to believe that a man who has painted with so frightful an honesty the heart-rending emptiness of the life of the poor can really grudge them every one of their pitiful pleasures, from courtship to tobacco It is difficult to believe that a poet in prose who has so powerfully exhibited the earth-born air of man, the essential kinship of a human being, with the landscape in which he lives, can deny so elemental a virtue as that which attaches a man to his own ancestors and his own land It is difficult to believe that the man who feels so poignantly the detestable insolence of oppression would not actually, if he had the chance, lay the oppressor flat with his fist All, however, arises from the search after a false simplicity, the aim of being, if I may so express it, more natural than it is natural to be It would not only be more human, it would be more humble of us to be content to be complex The truest kinship with humanity would lie in doing as humanity has always done, accepting with a sportsmanlike relish the estate to which we are called, the star of our happiness, and the fortunes of the land of our birth

The work of Tolstoy has another and more special significance It represents the re-assertion of a certain awful common-sense which characterised the most extreme utterances of Christ It is true that we cannot turn the cheek to the smiter, it is true that we cannot give our cloak to the robber, civilisation is too complicated, too vainglorious, too emotional The robber would brag, and we should blush, in other words, the robber and we are alike sentimentalists The command of Christ is impossible, but it is not insane, it is rather sanity preached to a planet of lunatics If the whole world was suddenly stricken with a sense of humour it would find itself mechanically fulfilling the Sermon on the Mount It is not the plain facts of the world which stand in the way of that consummation, but its passions of vanity and self-advertisement and morbid sensibility It is true that we cannot turn the cheek to the smiter, and the sole and sufficient reason is that we have not the pluck Tolstoy and his followers have shown that they have the pluck,

and even if we think they are mistaken, by this sign they conquer. Their theory has the strength of an utterly consistent thing. It represents that doctrine of mildness and non-resistance which is the last and most audacious of all the forms of resistance to every existing authority. It is the great strike of the Quakers which is more formidable than many sanguinary revolutions. If human beings could only succeed in achieving a real passive resistance they would be strong with the appalling strength of inanimate things, they would be calm with the maddening calm of oak or iron, which conquer without vengeance and are conquered without humiliation. The theory of Christian duty enunciated by them is that we should never conquer by force, but always, if we can, conquer by persuasion. In their mythology St George did not conquer the dragon: he tied a pink ribbon round its neck and gave it a saucer of milk. According to them, a course of consistent kindness to Nero would have turned him into something only faintly represented by Alfred the Great. In fact, the policy recommended by this school for dealing with the bovine stupidity and bovine fury of this world is accurately summed up in the celebrated verse of Mr Edward Lear.

“There was an old man who said, ‘How  
Shall I flee from this terrible cow?  
I will sit on a stile and continue to smile,  
Till I soften the heart of this cow.’”

Their confidence in human nature is really honourable and magnificent; it takes the form of refusing to believe the overwhelming majority of mankind, even when they set out to explain their own motives. But although most of us would in all probability tend at first sight to consider this new sect of Christians as little less outrageous than some brawling and absurd sect in the Reformation, yet we should fall into a singular error in doing so. The Christianity of Tolstoy is, when we come to consider it, one of the most thrilling and dramatic incidents in our modern civilisation. It represents a tribute to the Christian religion more sensational than the breaking of seals or the falling of stars.



From the point of view of a rationalist, the whole world is rendered almost irrational by the single phenomenon of Christian Socialism. It turns the scientific universe topsy-turvy, and makes it essentially possible that the key of all social evolution may be found in the dusty casket of some discredited creed. It cannot be amiss to consider this phenomenon as it really is.

The religion of Christ has, like many true things, been disproved an extraordinary number of times. It was disproved by the Neo-Platonist philosophers at the very moment when it was first starting forth upon its startling and universal career. It was disproved again by many of the sceptics of the Renaissance only a few years before its second and supremely striking embodiment, the religion of Puritanism, was about to triumph over many kings, and civilise many continents. We all agree that these schools of negation were only interludes in its history, but we all believe naturally and inevitably that the negation of our own day is really a breaking up of the theological cosmos, an Armageddon, a Ragnarok, a twilight of the gods. The man of the nineteenth century, like a schoolboy of sixteen, believes that his doubt and depression are symbols of the end of the world. In our day the great irreligionists who did nothing but dethrone God and drive angels before them have been outstripped, distanced, and made to look orthodox and humdrum. A newer race of sceptics has found something infinitely more exciting to do than nailing down the lids upon a million coffins, and the body upon a single cross. They have disputed not only the elementary creeds, but the elementary laws of mankind, property, patriotism, civil obedience. They have arraigned civilisation as openly as the materialists have arraigned theology, they have damned all the philosophers even lower than they have damned the saints. Thousands of modern men move quietly and conventionally among their fellows while holding views of national limitation or landed property that would have made Voltaire shudder like a nun listening to blasphemies. And the last and wildest phase of this saturnalia of scepticism, the school that goes furthest among thousands who go so far, the school that denies the moral

validity of those ideals of courage or obedience which are recognised even among pirates, this school bases itself upon the literal words of Christ, like Dr. Watts or Messrs Moody and Sankey. Never in the whole history of the world was such a tremendous tribute paid to the vitality of an ancient creed. Compared with this, it would be a small thing if the Red Sea were cloven asunder, or the sun did stand still at midday. We are faced with the phenomenon that a set of revolutionists whose contempt for all the ideals of family and nation would evoke horror in a thieves' kitchen, who can rid themselves of those elementary instincts of the man and the gentleman which cling to the very bones of our civilisation, cannot rid themselves of the influence of two or three remote Oriental anecdotes written in corrupt Greek. The fact, when realised, has about it something stunning and hypnotic. The most convinced rationalist is in its presence suddenly stricken with a strange and ancient vision, sees the immense sceptical cosmogonies of this age as dreams going the way of a thousand forgotten heresies, and believes for a moment that the dark sayings handed down through eighteen centuries may, indeed, contain in themselves the revolutions of which we have only begun to dream.

This value which we have above suggested, unquestionably belongs to the Tolstoians, who may roughly be described as the new Quakers. With their strange optimism, and their almost appalling logical courage, they offer a tribute to Christianity which no orthodoxies could offer. It cannot but be remarkable to watch a revolution in which both the rulers and the rebels march under the same symbol. But the actual theory of non-resistance itself, with all its kindred theories, is not, I think, characterised by that intellectual obviousness and necessity which its supporters claim for it. A pamphlet before us shows us an extraordinary number of statements about the New Testament, of which the accuracy is by no means so striking as the confidence. To begin with, we must protest against a habit of quoting and paraphrasing at the same time. When a man is discussing what Jesus meant, let him state first of all what He said, not what the man thinks He

would have said if He had expressed Himself more clearly  
Here is an instance of question and answer

Q "How did our Master Himself sum up the law in a few words?"

A "Be ye merciful, be ye perfect even as your Father, your Father in the spirit world is merciful, is perfect"

There is nothing in this, perhaps, which Christ might not have said except the abominable metaphysical modernism of "the spirit world", but to say that it is recorded that He did say it, is like saying it is recorded that He preferred palm-trees to sycamores. It is a simple and unadulterated untruth. The author should know that these words have meant a thousand things to a thousand people, and that if more ancient sects had paraphrased them as cheerfully as he, he would never have had the text upon which he founds his theory. In a pamphlet in which plain printed words cannot be left alone, it is not surprising if there are misstatements upon larger matters. Here is a statement clearly and philosophically laid down which we can only content ourselves with flatly denying. "The fifth rule of our Lord is that we should take special pains to cultivate the same kind of regard for people of foreign countries, and for those generally who do not belong to us, or even have an antipathy to us, which we already entertain towards our own people, and those who are in sympathy with us." I should very much like to know where in the whole of the New Testament the author finds this violent, unnatural, and immoral proposition. Christ did not have the same kind of regard for one person as for another. We are specifically told that there were certain persons whom He specially loved. It is most improbable that He thought of other nations as He thought of His own. The sight of His national city moved Him to tears, and the highest compliment He paid was, "Behold an Israelite indeed." The author has simply confused two entirely distinct things. Christ commanded us to have love for all men, but even if we had equal love for all men, to speak of having the same love for all men is merely bewildering nonsense. If we love a man at all, the impression he produces on us must be vitally different to the impression produced by another

man whom we love To speak of having the same kind of regard for both is about as sensible as asking a man whether he prefers chrysanthemums or billiards Christ did not love humanity; He never said He loved humanity He loved men Neither He nor anyone else can love humanity, it is like loving a gigantic centipede. And the reason that the Tolstoians can even endure to think of an equally distributed affection is that their love of humanity is a logical love, a love into which they are coerced by their own theories, a love which would be an insult to a tom-cat

But the greatest error of all lies in the mere act of cutting up the teaching of the New Testament into five rules It precisely and ingeniously misses the most dominant characteristic of the teaching—its absolute spontaneity. The abyss between Christ and all His modern interpreters is that we have no record that He ever wrote a word, except with His finger in the sand The whole is the history of one continuous and sublime conversation Thousands of rules have been deduced from it before these Tolstoian rules were made, and thousands will be deduced afterwards It was not for any pompous proclamation, it was not for any elaborate output of printed volumes, it was for a few splendid and idle words that the cross was set up on Calvary, and the earth gaped, and the sun was darkened at noonday

## NOTES

### RICHARD GARNETT

RICHARD GARNETT was born at Lichfield in 1835, and was the son of a clergyman who held the important position of Assistant-Keeper of Printed Books in the British Museum. He himself became Assistant-Librarian there in 1851, and gradually rose to the position of Keeper of Printed Books, for many years he edited the famous catalogue of the library, and he gave kindly help to the innumerable students of various nationalities who make researches in the wonderful collection of books over which he presided. But Dr Garnett was much more than a librarian. He was always a keen and deep student, he was a poet; he was an excellent and fearless critic, and he was the master of a refined and nervous English style. He wrote on many literary subjects and knew many languages, but what seems to have interested him most deeply was the Romantic Movement, and there was no one who had a fuller knowledge of the literature which has gathered round Shelley, Keats, Byron and Leigh Hunt than this shy and bookish scholar in the Museum. Those who wish to see what manner of man he was as a poet should read his grand translation of Tansillo's sonnet. As a writer of prose he may be estimated by reading the introductions he furnished to various volumes of poetry, and by essays such as that printed in this book. He died in 1906.

## I

### RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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- 11 Carlyle, Thomas (1795-1881) · the historian and essayist
- 11 Jackson, Andrew (1767-1845) · President of the United States in 1829 and 1833
- 11. Lincoln, Abraham (1809-1865) · President of the United States in 1861 and 1865, assassinated 1865
- 11 Laverpool, Lord (1770-1828) · succeeded Perceval as Prime Minister in June 1812, held office till 1827, when he gave place to Canning
- 11 Palmerston, Lord (1784-1865) · Prime Minister 1855-1858 and 1859-1865
- 12 Tennyson, Lord (1809-1892) · his *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*, appeared in 1830. He became Poet Laureate in 1850
- 12 Browning, Robert (1812-1889) · the poet. His first publication of any importance, *Pauline*, appeared in 1833

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- 12 Spencer, Herbert (1820-1903) · philosopher His *Social Statics* appeared in 1850.
- 12 Eliot, George . Mary Anne Evans (1819-1880) novelist Perhaps the greatest thinker of her sex All her novels have a didactic purpose, though it is often very artistically concealed. The first of the *Scenes of Clerical Life* was published in 1857.
- 12 Arnold, Matthew (1822-1888) . poet and critic *The Strayed Reveller*, his first collection of poems, appeared in 1849, but attracted little notice
- 12 Mill, John Stuart (1806-1873) economist and philosopher
12. Newman, John Henry (1801-1890) · the leading spirit in the Oxford Movement He is here called the elder Newman because his younger brother, Francis William Newman (1805-1897), was also a thinker and a writer, though his views were entirely opposed to those of John Henry Newman
12. Ruskin, John (1819-1900) a great writer on social and æsthetic subjects
- 12 Kingsley, Charles (1819-1875): writer of poetry, fiction and essays on social subjects
- 12 Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1803-1882) · the subject of this essay, a philosopher, lecturer and poet He was born at Boston, U S A , but lived most of his life at Concord. He was the head of the Transcendentalists, whom Dickens pokes fun at in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, but he is most widely known by his *Representative Men*, *English Traits*, *Conduct of Life*, and *Poems* He was a friend of Carlyle A very fine appreciation, though not altogether an enthusiastic one, is to be found in Matthew Arnold's *Addresses in America*
- 12 Dioscuri · Castor and Pollux, two brothers famous in Greek mythology, They are said to have been the sons of Leda and the brothers of Clytemnestra and of the beautiful Helen
- 12 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (1749-1832) Germany's greatest writer, a friend of Carlyle
- 12 Schiller, Frederick (1759-1805) · a great tragic poet of Germany
- 12 "The sole voice," etc · cf Arnold's description of Emerson as "a voice" in the *Addresses in America*
- 12 Goldsmith, Oliver (1728-1774) poet, novelist, playwright, essayist, and friend of Dr Johnson The essay mentioned is a "Description of Various Clubs" (*Works*, ed P Cunningham, III 158)
- 12 Socrates . the Greek philosopher (468-399 B C )
- 12 Tully and Cicero · the same person Cicero's name was Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B C )
- 13 Xenophon (430-352 B C ) · the Greek writer, author of, amongst other works, the *Memorabilia of Socrates*.

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- 13 Plato (429-347 B.C.). the greatest of the Greek philosophical writers
14. Darwin, Charles Robert (1809-1882) the most famous naturalist of the nineteenth century. Celebrated above all for his theory of evolution
- 14 "The Elder Mill" James Mill (1773-1836) father of John Stuart Mill, author of a *History of British India* and of books on Philosophy and political economy. A striking account of his somewhat cold and rigid character is to be found in John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography*
- 14 Wordsworth, William (1770-1850) the poet. In 1843 he succeeded Southey as Poet Laureate
- 15 Martineau, James (1805-1900) an eminent Unitarian theologian and philosopher. Brother of Harriet Martineau
- 15 Burke, Edmund (1729-1797). the greatest political thinker in the eighteenth century. It is easy to understand that his closely reasoned speeches did not appeal to the country gentlemen of the House of Commons when they were delivered, however much they may delight those who read them in book form
- 15 Pitt, William (1759-1806) the statesman
- 15 Fox, Charles James (1749-1806) Pitt's great and somewhat factious opponent in the House of Commons
- 15 Sheridan, Richard Brinsley (1751-1816) the famous orator and writer of comedies
- 16 "Ach' wie traurig," etc. from An Lina Goethe's *Vermischte Gedichte*. In *Werke*, ed. Erich Schmidt, 1909, I 96. Bowring's translation runs

"Ah, what grief the song imparts  
With its letters black on white,  
That, when breathed by thee, our hearts  
Now can break and now delight!"

A more poetical version is that of W. Edmonstone Aytoun

- 16 "Blessed Glendoveer" a good spirit. Cf. Southey, *Curse of Kichama*, vi 8
- 17 "One impulse," etc. from Wordsworth's poem *The Tables Turned*
- 19 Calvinism John Calvin (1509-1564), a Frenchman by birth, but one whose life was largely connected with Switzerland, and especially with Geneva (cf. Mark Pattison's fine essay on *Calvin at Geneva*), was a great advocate of the doctrine of Predestination and of the system of popular control in religious matters. In America his views had great influence and are represented by writers like Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)
- 19 Episcopalians: those who follow the Church of England in belief

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19. Unitarians: a religious body whose members do not accept the doctrine of the Trinity.
20. Cambridge: a town in the state of Massachusetts where the University of Harvard is situated
20. Cabot, J. E. - an American man of letters who edited Emerson's works The reference is to the Memoir of Emerson which he wrote (I 330)
20. Dr Holmes: Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894). American essayist, novelist, and poet His best-known works are *The Autocrat*, *The Professor*, and *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*. He wrote a book about Emerson in the American Men of Letters Series, in which (p 115) this passage occurs
20. Lowell, James Russell (1819-1891): an American poet and critic The words quoted occur in his essay on Thoreau (*Literary Essays*, I 366)
21. Dante (1265-1321): cf Plumptre's translation of the *Canzoniere*, etc, especially Sonnets XXXIII and XLV
22. Whitman, Walt (1819-1892). an American poet, unconventional in matters of form, but of great strength and beauty of phrase The student will find his message in *Leaves of Grass*
24. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772-1834): the poet
24. De Staël, Madame (1766-1817) - the witty daughter of Necker; she was author of *Corinne and Delphine* Being of liberal and romantic tendencies she was persecuted by Napoleon.
24. Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth (1807-1882) - the well-known American poet He translated Dante when well on in life
24. Lincoln - see p 232
25. Bunker Hill: the lines on "Concord Fight" beginning.
- "By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
Here once the embattled farmers stood  
And fired the shot heard round the world"
25. "Not from a vain," etc - from "The Problem" The lines begin -
- "Not from a vain or shallow thought  
His awful Jove young Pheidias brought"
25. "The Rhodora" - a poem on the flower of that name
25. "Beauty is truth," etc - the famous lines of Keats ("Ode to a Grecian Urn") run -
- "O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede  
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
With forest branches and the trodden weed,  
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
As doth eternity cold Pastoral"



When old age shall this generation waste,  
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'—that is all  
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know "

- 26 Franklin, Benjamin (1706-1790) American statesman  
 He was concerned in the negotiations connected with the American Revolution, he also made experiments of importance in electrical science As a writer he teaches worldly wisdom of a very practical kind

## JOHN GALSWORTHY

MR GALSWORTHY was born in 1867, was educated at Harrow and Oxford, and was duly called to the Bar in 1890 His fame is chiefly that of a writer of plays, though he has written good novels and good essays Of his novels, *The Island Pharisees* and *The Country House* are perhaps the most attractive Of his plays, *The Silver Box*, *Justice*, and *Loyalties* are the most powerful Mr Galsworthy has a message to deliver to his day and generation It is more direct and clear than that of Mr Bernard Shaw, though possibly the latter gains occasionally from the dramatic point of view by his whimsical uncertainty. The essay which will be found in this collection is an address delivered in America It illustrates the directness and clearness which are the distinguishing marks of Mr Galsworthy's style At the same time it supplies much matter for serious thought

## II

### TALKING AT LARGE

- 29 The American Civil War · the struggle between the Northern and Southern States of America over the questions of slavery and State rights It lasted from April 1861 to April 1865
- 30 "Justice" Mr Galsworthy's passion for justice is especially prominent in his plays
- 32 "The Headmaster" · possibly Dr. Butler, the Headmaster of Harrow
- 34 "Coiffed" · capped The coif was a close fitting white cap which the sergeants-at-law—a higher grade of barristers—used to wear as part of their uniform
- 34 "The saying about little children" St Matthew xviii 1, etc, runs
- 1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?
  - 2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,
  - 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be

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converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven

5. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me

6. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea

7. Woe unto the world because of offences ! for it must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh !

35 <sup>v</sup> Goths . one of the races that broke into and destroyed the more civilised Roman Empire

35 Thiergarten : a resort in Berlin where statues are placed

35 City of London : here Mr Galsworthy is somewhat severe  
There are good and bad examples of the sculptor's art there

35 Sphinx : an ancient monument in Egypt The habit of writing or cutting names on statues or other monuments, though as old as the days of ancient Rome, is an abiding testimony to the vulgarity of men's minds

36 "Things are not," etc . Mr. Galsworthy has a sly hit at Longfellow's somewhat commonplace line in the *Psalm of Life*

37. The Master of Balliol . the famous Dr Jowett (1817-1893)  
But the story has been told of other Masters of Colleges

37. Maxim, Sir Hiram (b 1840) : an American engineer. His name is remembered on account of the Maxim gun  
He lived long in England and was knighted there

38 "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity" . Ecclesiastes i 2

38. Cocktail . a drink made of various ingredients, invented in America and formerly very popular there

38 Dry : without intoxicating drink

39 Back-numbered old-fashioned

39 Guy : Guy Fawkes On the 5th of November in England it was usual to burn Guy Fawkes, the chief agent in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, in effigy, to the accompaniment of fireworks

40 Bolshevism : the new form of Communism invented and tried in Russia with such awful results

40 *vieux jeu* literally, old game; hence something that is out of date, old-fashioned

41 Neolithic : the later Stone Age of mankind, when stone implements were used

41 "Sprinkle," etc . put arms away in cupboards because no longer wanted, and sprinkle them with moth-powder to keep off the moths and so preserve them.

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- 43 Junkers the young Prussians of good birth who were anxious for war Here Mr Galsworthy is alluding to the rather stupid politicians in England who made the American Revolution possible, but the comparison seems hardly a fair one.

## HILAIRE BELLOC

Mr BELLOC is a Frenchman who was born in 1870 He was educated at Oxford, where he distinguished himself, and since that time he has occupied himself mainly with literature He has written on a variety of subjects, and his books on the French Revolution, that on Danton and that on Robespierre, have attracted notice and pleased even those whom they did not quite convince Mr Belloc is an ardent Roman Catholic and shares the hopes of his co-religionists with regard to the future—hopes which the flickering lights of the moment seem to encourage In his essays he is clear and vivid He never puzzles his readers like Lord Acton or Lady Blennerhassett, and he has not the touch of artistic mysticism which distinguishes Mr Garnett He is resolved to say something that the ordinary man can understand, and he says it simply and well. Possibly this comes from his experience as a lecturer.

## III

## REALITY

## PAGE

- 46 Ruskin see p, 233  
 46 "The greatest of the French Revolutionists" Danton is meant, though he is hardly the greatest of the French Revolutionists This passage occurs in a speech made in the Convention on the 13th of August, 1793  
 48 East Anglian East Anglia is a general name for the eastern counties of England The country there is low and flat and liable to be flooded  
 48 Algiers Algeria is a French colony in North Africa, hence the two characters described, native and French  
 48 Malignant rather a strong term for the sun in Algiers  
 48. Armadas a reference to the Spanish Armada of 1588  
 49 Cerdagne part of the department of the Pyrénées-Orientales in the south of France, a mountainous district  
 49 Tourcarol or Tour de Carel, a village in this part of France

## IV

## ON A SOUTHERN HARBOUR

- 52 Majorca an island in the Mediterranean belonging to Spain.  
 53. Barcelona a busy port in the north east of Spain.  
 53 Cerdagne see above.

PAGE

- 53 Perigord: an ancient part of France in the north of Guyenne.
53. Sussex: a county on the south coast of England, where Mr. Belloc presumably lives
53. Palma: the port of Majorca.
54. Gascons: men from Gascony, a province in the south-west of France
54. Catalans: men from Catalonia, a province on the south-east coast of Spain
54. Normans: men from Normandy, in the north of France
54. Frisians: men from Frisia, a country on the coast of Europe opposite England, partly in Holland and partly in Germany.
54. Rhenish men: men of the Rhine country
- 55 Nave: a cathedral runs east and west, and the main part from the west to the point where the transepts cross and the chancel begins is called the nave

## LORD ACTON

LORD ACTON, one of the most impressive, one might add one of the most mysterious figures of the nineteenth century, was born in 1834 at Naples. He was cosmopolitan by descent, and was educated partly in England, partly in Germany, and partly in France, he knew many languages, was always a deep student, and mingled when quite young as an intellectual equal with the eminent men of various countries. He gradually accumulated a very large historical library—now at Cambridge—and in history he was always chiefly interested throughout his life. He entered Parliament and edited various magazines, he was the intimate friend of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Rosebery, and perhaps had greater influence over the former than anyone else. In 1895 Lord Rosebery recommended his appointment as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, and at Cambridge he remained till his final illness in 1902. His works are small in bulk, unless we take account of the Cambridge Modern History, which he planned, but they are very impressive. No one ever, not even Gibbon, put down his foot so decisively as Lord Acton. Dr. Figgis has described his manner of writing as follows: "His style is difficult; it is epigrammatic, packed with allusions, dignified, but never flowing. He has been termed 'a Meredith turned historian', but the most notable qualities are the passion for political righteousness that breathes in all his utterances, the sense of the supreme worth of the individual conscience, and the inalienable desire for liberty alike in Church and State." It need hardly be said that these qualities make his lectures and essays highly attractive to those who are not afraid of robust mental exercise. Hardly anyone, it may be added, has maintained so high a standard throughout

his work It is practically all characterised by the same excellences, and, it must be added, by the same bewildering but delightful difficulties

## V

## THE HERALDS OF THE REVOLUTION

PAGE

- 57 Jansenists · a party in the French Church which took its name from Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638), a Dutch bishop of Ypres, who wrote a book on Grace and Free will called *Augustinus*. In France the views of the party were defended by Arnaud and by other theologians whose centre was the Abbey of Port Royal, where Pascal and other eminent men lived from time to time. The Jansenists were condemned by the Pope in the famous bull *Unigenitus*, but they exercised great influence in France
- 57 Domat, Jean (1625–1696) an eminent French Jurist. The friend of Pascal.
- 57 St Thomas St Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274), medieval theologian, the greatest of the schoolmen
57. Edict of Nantes promulgated by Henri IV of France in 1598 to settle the disputes between Protestants and Catholics in his dominions. It really made the Protestants a separate power in the State, but its revocation in 1685 was the occasion of great loss to France, as a large number of industrious Frenchmen left the country
- 57 Bayle, Pierre (1647–1706): a writer of liberal tendencies famous for his Dictionary, which foreshadowed the better known *Encyclopædia*
- 57 Jurieu, Pierre (1637–1713) a French Protestant controversialist, who had as an opponent the more famous Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), one of the most majestic preachers France has produced
- 58 Maultrot, Gabriel Nicolas (1714–1803) French jurist and canonist
- 58 Fénelon, François de Salignac de la Mothe (1651–1715) Archbishop of Cambrai, a theologian and a critic of the government of Louis XIV, by whom he was punished. In religion he adopted the Quietist views of the mystic Madame Guyon, but retracted after he was ordered to do so by the Pope
58. Flourey, André Hercule (1653–1743) · a cardinal and minister of Louis XV. To him France owed the province of Lorraine
- 58 Chevreuse, Charles Honoré d'Albert, Duc de (1646–1712) son-in-law of Colbert and governor of Guyonne, one of the French provinces.
- 60 Bossuet, Jacques Bénigne (1627–1704): great French preacher.

PAGE

60. Dubois, Guillaume (1656-1723): cardinal; minister of France under the Regency of the Duc d'Orleans. A man of bad character, but an intelligent statesman.
60. Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat, Baron de (1689-1755). famous French political philosopher, author of the widely known *Esprit des lois* and the *Lettres Persanes*.
60. Condillac, Etienne de (1715-1780). a famous French philosopher.
60. Turgot, Anne Robert Jacques, Baron de l'Aulne (1721-1781). French minister of finances and economist. He wished to introduce various salutary reforms suggested by the Physiocrats, but was only partially allowed to have his way owing to the opposition of vested interests.
61. Tocqueville, Alexis Charles Henri de (1805-1859). A profound political thinker. Author of *La Démocratie en Amérique* and *l'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*.
61. States-General: the General Assembly of France, composed of the deputies representing the nobles, the clergy, and the lower or third estate, met at irregular intervals from 1302 to 1614, after which it did not meet again till 1789.
61. Voltaire, François M. Arouet de (1694-1778). a great French writer of the eighteenth century. He attempted almost every form of literature with success, and did much by ridicule to pave the way for reform.
63. *Prolem sine matre creatam* offspring produced without a mother.
63. Rousseau, Jean Jacques (1712-1778). perhaps the most popular writer on political science who has ever lived, he was born in Geneva, but passed most of his life in France. His main doctrines can be gathered from Lord Acton's summary of them in the pages which follow.
63. Hume, David (1711-1776). Scottish philosopher, historian and essayist.
63. d'Argenson, René Louis, Marquis (1694-1757). French statesman. Minister for Foreign Affairs 1744-7.
65. Lucretius (B.C. 95-53?). Roman poet who flourished in the century before the birth of Jesus Christ.
65. Seneca. Roman writer, the tutor of the Emperor Nero. He died A.D. 66.
65. Pascal, Blaise (1623-1662): French philosopher and mathematician. Great opponent of the Jesuits.
65. Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (1646-1716). German philosopher.
65. Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim (1729-1781): German writer of plays and treatises on aesthetics.
65. Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1770-1831): one of the greatest German philosophers.
65. Condorcet, Antoine Nicolas de (1743-1794). a great French philosopher who perished, by his own hand, during the Revolution.

## PAGE

- 65 Guizot, François (1787-1874) French writer and statesman A Protestant and the most eminent of the school known as the Doctrinaires Fell from power in 1848
- 65 Lamennais, Félicité R de (1782-1854) A French priest who had a stormy career and who exercised much influence
- 65 Scherer, Edmond (1815-1889). French critic and writer on politics
- 66 Diderot, Denis (1713-1784). French writer on the liberal side, one of the founders of the *Encyclopædia*, author of various unsatisfactory novels
- 66 Raynal, Guillaume, T F (1713-1796) a French clergyman, but a free-thinker A historian and philosopher Wrote articles in the *Encyclopædia*
- 66 Adam Smith (1723-1790) the founder of the modern science of political economy Published the *Wealth of Nations* in 1776
- 66 Harrington, James (1611-1677) political theorist who in 1656 produced a famous book, the *Oceana*, describing an ideal commonwealth
- 67 Newcastle, Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of (1693-1768) Prime Minister of England 1754-6 and 1757-62
- 67 North, Frederick, Earl of Guilford (1732-1792) Prime Minister of England, 1770-82
- 68 Mercier de la Riviere, F F J H (1720-1793) a French economist who belonged to the school of the Physiocrats
- 68 Asgill, John (1659-1738) a forgotten and somewhat eccentric writer in England who seems to have foreseen the system of assignats used in the French Revolution
- 69 Landsgemeinde local assemblies
- 71 Helvétius, Claude Adrien (1715-1771) a French philosopher.
- 71 Bolingbroke, Henry St John, Viscount (1678-1751) English politician, minister from 1704 to 1708 and from 1710 to 1714 His best known work is *The Patriot King*.
- 71 Milton, John (1608-1674) the famous poet Here introduced, however, because of his prose tracts, such as the *Areopagitica*
- 71 Wolf, Johan Christian (1679-1754): German philosopher
- 71 Sidney, Algernon (1622-1683) an English republican who fought in the great Civil War till he was seriously wounded In the days of the Rye House Plot he was tried and executed His chief work, *Discourses Concerning Government*, is an answer to those who favoured the Divine right of kings
- 71 Duplessis Mornay. Philippe de Mornay, Seigneur du Plessis-Marly, commonly known as Duplessis-Mornay (1549-1622) a great man amongst the Huguenots and a friend of King Henri IV of France
- 71 Major, John (1469-1550) a Scotch divine who maintained

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- that the people were the sole source of civil power. He was provost of St Salvator's College at St Andrews
71. Jurieu, Pierre (1637-1713) · French Protestant theologian
71. Alcuin (735-804) : a learned theologian of the Middle Ages who was born at York, but passed most of his time at the Court of Charlemagne
72. Hooker, Richard (1534-1600) a learned theologian and writer on government of the time of Queen Elizabeth. His great work, his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, is famous not only for its matter, but for the splendid English in which it is written
72. Newman, John Henry (1801-1890) · Cardinal. Was at first in the English Church and led what is known as the Oxford Movement. Then he passed over to the Church of Rome. He was a master of a magnificent style at once clear and weighty and pathetic. The book here referred to is his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, published in 1845. Newman was a poet of very high order as well as a theologian
72. Mably, Gabriel B. de (1709-1785). French writer on politics and history. A socialist
72. Morelly, an obscure but able French socialist of the eighteenth century, author of *Code de la Nature*. He was born about 1750, and must be distinguished from the Abbé Morellet (1727-1819)
72. Vico, John Baptist (1668-1744) : Italian writer on the philosophy of history and other subjects
72. Giannone, Peter (1676-1748) Italian historian
72. Genovesi, Antonio (1712-1769) Italian professor of philosophy
72. Young, Arthur (1741-1820) writer on agriculture and author of a famous book, *Travels in France*, which is an authority for the condition of that country before 1789.
72. Leopold (1747-1792) · was Grand Duke of Tuscany from 1747 to 1790, when he became the Emperor Leopold II
72. Firmian, Charles Joseph, Comte de (1716-1782) Governor-General of Lombardy when it was an Austrian province
72. Beccaria, Caesar de (1738-1794) · a famous writer on criminal law, whose principles, more merciful than those accepted at the time, had great influence throughout Europe
73. Brissot, Jacques Pierre (1754-1793) · member of the French Convention, leader of a party known as the Brissotins. Guillotined
73. Marat, Jean Paul (1743-1793) one of the vilest wretches that ever lived, instigator of the massacres of September 1792 in the French Revolution; assassinated in his bath by Charlotte Corday
73. Mesher, Jean (1664-1729) · a free-thinking and philo-



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sophistical French clergyman His name, however, seems to have been used by Voltaire and Holbach

73 Strauss, David Frederick (1808-1874) A German theologian whose *Life of Jesus* was translated by George Eliot

## MAX BEERBOHM

MR BEERBOHM—it seems odd to use the prefix in the case of so well-known a character in the world of letters and art—belongs to a clever family He was born in London in 1872, and though he has travelled much and lives much in Italy, he is essentially a Londoner His personality indeed is one of the influences which makes London what it is He was educated at Charterhouse and at Merton College, Oxford, but it can hardly be said that his original mind owes much to his scholastic training He has made his mark in various different ways as an artist, and especially as a caricaturist, as a dramatic critic, and as an essayist He is above all things a wit, and he draws wittily as well as writes wittily In a word, he is an institution, and recalls the famous words of Napoleon, "Je ne suis pas un homme, mais une chose" The essay chosen will illustrate the gay versatility of his pen

## VI

## LAUGHTER

PAGE

74 Bergson, Henri (b 1859) the famous French philosopher, who is mentioned here because he has written a book on *Laughter*

74 James, William (1842-1910) a well-known American philosopher Professor at Harvard University

74 Schopenhauer, Arthur (1788-1860) the German pessimistic philosopher

76 "Crackling of Thorns" Ecclesiastes vii 5, 6

5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools

6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: thus also is vanity

78 Moore, Thomas (1779-1852) the well-known Irish poet, author of *Lalla Rookh* and the *Life of Byron* He is best remembered now by his *Irish Melodies*

78 Rogers, Samuel (1763-1855). the banker poet, famous in his own day as the author of *The Pleasures of Memory* and *Italy*, but now known chiefly as the intimate and kindly friend of men of more original genius than himself

78 St James's Place a quiet street leading off St James's Street in London

78 Lord Thurloe (1781-1829). a minor poet, nephew of the great Lord Chancellor The name is usually spelt Thurlow.

## PAGE

- 79 Lord Northcliffe: who occupied the house at the time this essay was written. He was a great newspaper owner, and died in 1922
- 80 Johnson, Samuel (1709-1784): the great lexicographer and critic.
- 80 Temple Bar. the western boundary of the City of London. Formerly marked by a gateway.—“Fleet Ditch,” an old and very dirty streamlet which used to cross Fleet Street some way further east than Temple Bar
- 80 Chambers, Sir Robert (1737-1803) who succeeded Blackstone as Vinerian Professor of Civil Law at Oxford, and who in 1773 was appointed second Judge of the Supreme Court in Bengal, Impey being Chief Justice
- 82 “Babble of green fields,” etc: Shakespeare, *King Henry V* II iii
- 84 “High Church or Low Church”: in the Church of England there are these two parties. The “High” are fonder of elaborate ritual, pay more attention to the sacraments, and come nearer to the Church of Rome than the “Low”
- 85 “Vintner, not toper”: the man who hands out the wine, not he who drinks it

## H G WELLS

MR. WELLS was born on the 21st of September, 1866, at Bromley in Kent, where his father kept a shop. He himself served in one for a time, and has drawn upon his experiences in that station of life in his delightful stories *Kipps* and *Mr Polly*. He then became an assistant master at a neighbouring grammar school, and some of his life there may be featured in the very powerful and touching little book called *Love and Mr Lewisham*. He now prepared himself by private study for the London University examinations, and obtained the degree of B Sc with first-class honours. He subsequently worked as a tutor at the Cambridge Correspondence College, but he soon quitted educational work of this kind because he had become celebrated as a writer.

Mr Wells has achieved fame in several different directions, and yet in all his various books there are traces of the same didactic spirit. Even in his humorous novels, such as those mentioned above, there is the effort, concealed it may be, but still there, to teach us something. This is more apparent in his serious stories, such as *Anne Veronica* or the *New Machiavelli*, and in his anticipations of the future which have attracted most attention. It is in these last, in books like *The War of the Worlds*, or *When the Sleeper Wakes*, that the power of his wonderful imagination has had fullest play. If Mr. Wells has done nothing else, he has made us think about the world that is to be. We may not agree with him, but he has made us

think. He surveys the progress of scientific discovery, and tells us in a narrative of great simplicity and clearness what it is all going to mean to the ordinary man. No one else has performed thus for us in the same way, though a good many other people have tried to do so. It was impossible that so great a world movement as the war of 1914 should pass without his explanatory comment, and Mr Wells has had a good deal to say on the subject. The essay which has been printed in this collection attempts to deal with the situation as we find it to day. The student must not assume that Mr. Wells' diagnosis is necessarily the only possible one. He must think on these things, and if he can detect flaws in the argument and work out for himself a different scheme for the future from that which is presented here, Mr Wells will be the first to congratulate him. For, as we have said, Mr. Wells is above all things a teacher, and teachers often do good work by arousing a spirit of criticism and even of contradiction.

## VII

## THE PROBABLE FUTURE OF MANKIND

PAGE

- 87 "Han prosperity" - began in China in 206 B.C. and lasted till towards the end of the second century A.D.
- 89 Mongols - the Asian race whose most famous sovereign was Gengiz Khan in the thirteenth century.
- 89 Crescendo - gradually increasing. Used chiefly in music.
- 96 Hypertrophy - literally the enlargement of anything due to excessive nutrition.
- 101 Dons - men who occupy positions in a university. Mr Wells calls them bashful, others might not think of them as that, but the point is immaterial.
- 101 Mars - war.
- 101 The chief end of education - what follows is material for discussion. Many different opinions are possible, perhaps desirable.
- 104 "And the British Empire," etc. - the real difficulty is that of reconciling patriotism and all the invaluable things that it means and has meant with a due regard to the "federation of the World." The student must approach that great problem in a constructive spirit, remembering above all that what we have of the spirit of self-sacrifice is not to be thrown away in exchange for a dream which can never be realized, and which is probably of less value than that spirit.
- 104 "The military class" - it may be doubted whether the affairs of the British Empire are in the grip of the military class, certainly that class, which does not deserve either of the epithets applied to it by Mr Wells, would not agree that such is the case. The fact remains

PAGE

- to be that the affairs of the Empire have been and are in the hands of a well-meaning but puzzled bureaucracy composed for the most part of very ordinary men, who take very ordinary views of what comes before them
- 108 "And since at first," etc : here Mr Wells would not seem to be right If we wished to point to those places above all others in England or India where new thoughts are welcomed and given a fair hearing, and where tradition, in really important matters, counts for little, we should point to the Universities.
109. "The teacher," etc • he would indeed be foolish who would deny force and importance to the influence of education On the other hand, it must be remembered that nearly all our notions regarding politics or large questions in general are arrived at after we have reached maturity Far from dancing on the wires of their early education, most men do exactly the opposite
- 110 "A belligerent government," etc • and yet it is quite probable that they would do more harm by refusing to obey than by obeying Everyone knows that the one thing the chairman of a troublesome meeting wishes is that the leader of the opposition should go away, and this is what would happen if the dissatisfied citizen took the course suggested. As for the right and duty to "judge his magistrate before he obeys him," we may be quite certain that if this precept were generally followed no one would be able to sleep in his bed We live in a world, and not in heaven, many men are ready to go wrong, and government can only be carried on on certain very general principles The governed must be prepared to take the rough with the smooth
- 112 "For this League of Nations," etc : the student must not be led to despise the day of small things The League of Nations in its present form has some very notable achievements to its credit What Mr Wells seems to forget is that it is a very fine embodiment of the ideals of the world's most distinguished men They cannot go further just yet because the average man is what he is If the aims of the League were more pretentious, the League would be less efficient than it is, because more widely separated from the thoughts and wishes of the people for whose benefit, and by whose support, it exists

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

In addition to other very outstanding merits, Stevenson will always deserve the high praise due to one who has struggled against the constant worry and discouragement of ill-health From quite early years he was an invalid, and his short life was

occupied mainly in a fight with consumption. He was born in Edinburgh in 1850, and his father, a well-known engineer, destined him at first to follow his own profession. Fate, however, decided otherwise. He was educated at the Edinburgh Academy, and afterwards at the Edinburgh University, but in 1871 it was settled that he should go to the Bar, and he duly became a barrister in 1875. He did not, however, practise, indeed he could not. For one reason he had already begun to write, and for another the stern requirements of weak health had already made it necessary for him to travel. Some of his early journeys abroad resulted in books, and very delightful books they are. Of such may be mentioned the *Inland Voyage*, describing a canoe tour in Belgium, and the *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*. He also began work as an essayist, and what he wrote in this way is represented by the famous collections, known as *Virginibus puerisque* and *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. Then we have his wanderings in America, his marriage, and his constant illness. But in 1882 he made his first great popular impression with *Treasure Island*. This was published whilst he was living on the Riviera, trying to win back health and strength. Other stories and other wanderings followed, and ultimately he settled down in 1890 in Samoa, where during the few short years that remained much of his best work was done. He died and was buried there in December 1894. Stevenson as a writer has taken his place amongst the Classics, whether he will remain there, who can say? He was above all things a man who took infinite pains, and his admirers maintain that "in by far the greater part of his mature work, the effect of labour and fastidious selection is lost in the felicity of the result." He is such an admirable story-teller that occasionally the reader may wish that he had trusted more to his own natural powers and less to the labours which he has himself described. As things are he belongs to the school of Pater and Swinburne, whereas nature seems to have intended him for that of Fielding. Still we must not grumble, for he was a very fine writer, and the vividness of his imagination has induced many of his readers to compare him with Scott. A certain boyishness makes his stories delightfully fresh and interesting, but the noble courage which made him so careless of much that ordinary people value so highly, placed him high in the ranks of those who have realised their philosophical ideals in their daily life.

## VIII

## BOOKS WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED ME

PAGE

113 The Editor the editor of the *British Weekly*, in which this essay first appeared

PAGE

114. Mrs. Scott-Siddons: a descendant of the famous actress, Mrs Siddons
- 114 D'Artagnan: the hero of Alexandre Dumas' novel *Les Trois Mousquetaires* He reappears in the *Vicomte de Bragelonne*
114. *Pilgrim's Progress*: the great work of John Bunyan (1628-1688) It was published in 1678
114. Montaigne: Michael de Montaigne (1533-1592), author of the famous *Essais*. Their form suggested, no doubt, those of Lord Bacon.
- 115 Whitman, Walt: see p 235
115. Spencer, Herbert (1820-1903): the famous philosopher
- 115 *Caput mortuum*: worthless residue
- 116 Goethe: see p 233
116. Lowes, George Henry (1817-1878): a charming writer, if a somewhat inaccurate philosopher. He is known to fame as the lover of George Eliot His *Life of Goethe* is perhaps his best work
116. *Werther*: one of the best known works of Goethe.
- 116 Schiller: see p 233
116. Martial (43-104): the Roman poet
- 116 Marcus Aurelius: the Roman Emperor who reigned from A.D. 161 to 180 A man of the noblest character.
117. Wordsworth, William (1770-1850): the chief poet of the Romantic School
117. *The Egoist*: one of the finest novels by George Meredith (1828-1909)
- 118 Thoreau, Henry David (1817-1862): a somewhat self-conscious American writer He lived much in the woods alone His best known book is perhaps *Walden* He was a great advocate of the simple life, and practised what he preached.
- 118 Hazlitt, William (1778-1830): an excellent essayist and critic, the friend of Lamb
- 118 Milford, Algernon Bertram Freeman (1837-1916): Lord Redesdale. The book mentioned has great charm

## IX

## AN AUTUMN EFFECT

120. "Nous ne décrivons jamais," etc: we never describe Nature better than when we constrain ourselves to express soberly and simply the impression which it has made upon us
120. Theuriet, André (1833-1907): a well-known French writer, author of many novels
- 120 *Revue des Deux Mondes* an old-established French

monthly magazine of very high literary quality, founded in 1829 Its most famous editor was M F Brunetiere

122 High Wycombe and Tring two places in Buckinghamshire

124 Parish constable a country policeman

124 Dogberry the allusion is to Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing*, III iii

*Dogberry* This is your charge you shall comprehend all vagrom men you are to bid any man stand in the prince's name

*Second Watch* How if a' will not stand?

*Dogberry* Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave

*Verges* If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects

*Dogberry* True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects

124 Seaboard Bohemia Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, Act III so iii, is headed

"Bohemia A desert country near the sea"

124 Florizel and Perdita two characters in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*

124 "Puritan sang Psalms to hornpipes" *Winter's Tale*, IV iii 47

124 "Four-and-twenty shearers," etc *Winter's Tale*, IV iii 44

124 Autolycus a character in *Winter's Tale*

125 Sterne Laurence Sterne (1713-1768), a famous English writer of the eighteenth century. He wrote *Tristram Shandy* and *The Sentimental Journey* Cf Chapter XLIV (ed Saintsbury), in the latter

125 Street Arab a poor boy who runs wild about the streets

126 Neddy an old name for a donkey

127 Great Missenden another village in Buckinghamshire

127 *Sub jove* in the open air

127 Jericho when the Israelites blew their trumpets, the Bible tells us the walls of Jericho fell down flat See Joshua vi 20

128 James, G P R George Payne Rainsford James (1801-1860), an English author who wrote a very large number of historical and other novels His popularity, considerable in its day, has waned

128 Baudelaire, Charles (1821-1867) a well-known French poet

128 Asmodean Asmodeus, a character in Le Sage's *Diable Boiteux* who takes off the roofs of the houses in Madrid and sees what the people are doing inside

PAGE

- 128 Caliph The Caliph Haroun al Raschid, who is aided by Giaffar
- 129 Apologue a moral fable
129. Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1770-1831) - the famous German philosopher
- 129 McCosh, James (1811-1894): a well-known writer on philosophy who was for many years President of Princeton College, New Jersey, in the United States
129. Wendover a place in Buckinghamshire
- 129 Lacuna - gap
131. Pan: the Greek God of nature A rustic spirit, son of Hermes
131. Siesta midday sleep
- 131 Lilliputian Lilliput was the country in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* where men, houses and trees were all very small
132. Scrannel - weak and feeble. Cf. Milton, *Lycidas*, 124 .
- " And when they list, their lean and flashy songs  
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw "
- 134 Shandy, Walter - father of Tristram Shandy, a character in Sterne's novel of that name
134. "The book I read": perhaps J. A. Symond's *Renaissance in Italy* The names are those of men of the Renaissance
135. "Cornelia-like" Cornelia was a famous Roman matron daughter of Scipio Africanus, mother of the Gracchi Her children, she said, were her jewels
- 138 *O fortunatos agricolas!* Oh, happy swains! (Virgil).
- 138 Mr Arch - Joseph Arch (1826-1919), a politician who represented the agricultural labourers and did much to improve their position

### ARNOLD BENNETT

MR ARNOLD BENNETT was born in 1867 in Staffordshire, amid the people and the places that he has so successfully attempted to make familiar to the readers of his novels. He engaged in various occupations until 1900, after which he devoted himself to literature. He has made a public for himself, and that public is a very extensive one, and in his own special line he may fairly be said to be without a rival. The five towns, that is, the pottery districts of Staffordshire, are what he describes, his heroes and his heroines mostly live there. Some of his stories are connected with others by the recurrence of the same families, and this circumstance seems to tighten the hold of the author upon his circle of readers. Perhaps *Clayhanger* and *The Old Wives' Tale* are the best examples of his art that we can suggest, though the doubt may be hunted in regard to the former whether a man of exactly



the type of the hero would be the result of the forces that acted upon him Mr Bennett is a playwright, as well as a novelist, and has shown great skill in stage craft *The Great Adventure*, an adaptation from one of his novels, was deservedly popular Mr Bennett's chief strength lies in description, both of men and of places He is a realist, but his realism has just that touch of poetic idealism necessary to show the true artist The note of sadness which must be present in any description of provincial life, or indeed of any life, which is to be really convincing, is never wanting, it can be felt, for instance, in *The Old Wives' Tale* The danger which such a writer faces is that of wearying his readers They may get tired of the Five Towns and of those very ordinary people who live there This Mr Bennett has so far avoided, and one may be quite sure that he knows of it We often wish that the Barchester Novels were more numerous, but we are quite sure that Anthony Trollope was wise in not writing more of them than he did

## X

## MIDDLE CLASS

## PAGE

- 139 Mudie's • a large circulating library which has subscribers all over England
- 139 The *Times* Book Club a circulating library carried on in connection with the *Times* newspaper.
- 139 Smith's bookstall Messrs W H Smith & Son carry on the bookstalls at various railway stations in England, just as Messrs Wheeler & Co do in India They also have a circulating library run in connection therewith
- 139 Charing Cross a large London railway station
- 140 The Stores The Army and Navy Stores, a large shop in Victoria Street, Westminster
- 140 Harrod's • a large shop in the Brompton Road, London.
- 140 Rumpelmeyer's a confectioner's in St James's Street, London, where well-to-do people go to have tea
- 140 The Royal Academy an annual exhibition of pictures which takes place at Burlington House, Piccadilly
- 140 Albemarle Street and Dover Street two parallel streets leading north from Piccadilly which are occupied chiefly by clubs
- 140 "Artists" the word is used widely here to cover anyone who shows special skill and taste in what he does In this sense it applies to a writer or a sculptor or a pianist, as well as to a painter
- 140 Henry Harland an American novelist who wrote *The Cardinal's Snuffbox*, amongst other books
- 140 "*Il faut*," etc the French saying is, "*Il faut souffrir*

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pour être belle," which means, one has to suffer in order to be beautiful—in other words, one must take a lot of trouble to be so. What Harland says is, one must suffer to be the salt of the earth, the chosen few.

- 141. Travelling Saloon. an Americanism for travelling first class
- 141. Promenade deck. the higher and pleasanter part of the ship, confined to first-class passengers.
- 141. Steerage. the third-class passengers. It really means the part of the ship in which the third class passengers are accommodated.
- 141. *Status quo*. the state of things as they are
- 141. The Brushwood Boy: one of Kipling's characters, George Cottar.
- 142. Bloc: party. Mr. Arnold Bennett is really describing the upper middle class rather than the middle class as a whole.
- 142. Thomas Hardy. born in 1840, poet and novelist. His most famous novels perhaps are, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.
- 142. H. G. Wells. see p. 245
- 142. Hale White. William Hale White, author of *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*, etc.
- 142. Rudyard Kipling. born 1865, author of *Plain Tales from the Hills* and many other stories and poems.
- 142. J. M. Barrie. born 1860, writer of Scottish stories such as *The Little Minister*, and numerous sketches and plays.
- 142. W. W. Jacobs (1863-1922): once a Civil Servant, later a writer of amusing stories, such as *Many Cargoes*, and plays.
- 142. Murray Gilchrist: a novelist who wrote amongst other stories *Damosel Croft*.
- 142. Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), a novelist who has described life in the Far East with great power and artistic beauty. *Almayer's Folly* (1895) is a good example of his work.
- 142. Leonard Merrick: born 1864, a novelist who wrote *Conrad in Quest of his Youth*, and other stories.
- 142. George Moore (1857- ), a novelist who has a certain power, though he has never been exactly popular. *Esther Waters* is one of his best known works.
- 143. George Meredith (1828-1909). novelist and poet. His chief works were published a good many years ago. *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, in 1859, *Evan Harrington* in 1861, *Rhoda Fleming* in 1865. Later came *Beauchamp's Career* in 1875, *The Egoist* in 1879, and *Diana of the Crossways* in 1885. Meredith is above all a stylist, but one would hardly say that he devoted much attention to the middle classes at any time.

## PAGE

- 143 Henry James (1843-1916) an American novelist of ability, but also somewhat wearisomely minute in the development of his stories *The American* (1877) is as good an example as any
- 143 William Frend de Morgan a popular novelist of the day *Joseph Vance* (1906), *It Never can Happen Again* (1909) are specimens of his work
- 143 John Galsworthy see p 236
- 143 John Singer Sargent born 1856 A popular present day painter.
- 143 Stendhal the *nom de plume* of Henri Boyle (1783-1842), whose best-known novel is *La Chartreuse de Parme*
- 144 Horace Annesley Vachell born in 1861 A novelist whose book mentioned here, *The Hill*, deals with Harrow School
- 145 Georges, Mademoiselle (1787-1867) a famous French actress

## E V LUCAS

MR. EDWARD VERRALL LUCAS, who was born in 1868, describes himself as a publisher's reader, and at the same time is a very popular writer and editor. He is an authority on Lamb, whose works he has edited and whose life he has written. He is also a descriptive essayist of pleasing quality, and a novelist who has found acceptance at the hands of those who sympathise with him in his amiable view of life. His touch is light, and his initials are often found in *Punch*. Perhaps *London Lavender* and *Over Bemerton's* will serve as well as any of his numerous works to illustrate his style. One must not go to him for such things as Mark Pattison or Sir James Fitz-James-Stephen or Leslie Stephen deal in—his province is a different one.

## XI

## A FRIEND OF THE TOWN

## PAGE

- 146 Contents bill the contents bill of the daily newspaper displayed at the railway station book-stall
- 146 Jacobs's latest a reference to W W Jacobs (see p 253)
147. Varmints: varmint is a colloquial and facetious form of vermin
- 148 Miss Jewett Sarah Orme Jewett a clever American novelist *The Country Doctor*, by her, is also well known in England
- 148 London Bridge London Bridge Railway Station The position of manager of the book-stall there would be of greater importance than at a country place

## XII

## A PHILOSOPHER THAT FAILED

PAGE

- 150 Oliver Edwards · particulars as to the subject of this essay had best be searched for in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Ed Birkbeck Hill
150. Pembroke College one of the Colleges at Oxford Dr Johnson was there
- 150 Dr. Johnson see p. 245
- 150 Barnard's Inn: one of the old Inns of Chancery, in Holborn, London It used to be a collection of buildings in which law students, and later on lawyers in practice, lived or worked Most of it has now become the Mercers' School, but the picturesque hall remains
150. Stevenage: a village in Hertfordshire
- 150 Bede (673-735) a priest and historian of Saxon times, who lived most of his life at Jarrow, in Northumberland His bones rest in Durham Cathedral See his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book II ch xiii; a poetical rendering will be found in Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, No xvi
- 150 Butcher Row some old buildings near St Clement's Church, in London, long since pulled down
- 150 St Clement's: St Clement Danes Church, in the Strand
- 151 Fleet Street · one of the great thoroughfares of London, now it is mostly occupied by newspaper offices
151. Tempe · a beautiful vale in Greece
- 151 Mull an island on the coast of Scotland Boswell was a Scotchman
- 151 Incense here used for flattery
- 151 Bolt Court a courtyard off Fleet Street where Dr Johnson lived at the time
- 152 Parson: clergyman
- 153 Turnpike: a gateway on a road In those days one paid a small sum for passing through, and this sum went to the repairs of the roads
- 153 Mr Burke see p 234
- 153 Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792). a very great portrait painter of the eighteenth century, and a close friend of Dr Johnson
153. Mr Courtenay: John Courtenay (1738-1815), an Irish friend of Dr Johnson, on whose character he wrote a poem He was a Member of Parliament
- 153 Mr Malone. Anthony Malone (1700-1776) · the great Shakespearean editor and critic
- 153 Dr Young Edward Young (1681-1765), the author of the *Night Thoughts* The lines referred to are from the fourth night, and run

"O my coevals! remnants of yourselves'  
Poor human ruins, tott'ring o'er the grave!"

## CYRIL ARGENTINE ALINGTON

DR ALINGTON, born in 1872, was educated at Marlborough and at Trinity College, Oxford, where he had a distinguished career. He became Fellow of All Souls in 1896. He was a master at Marlborough and then at Eton. In 1908 he was chosen to be headmaster of Shrewsbury, and in 1917 he succeeded Dr Lyttelton as headmaster of Eton. Mr Blowitz was once asked how it was that he had been so successful as a journalist, he answered that perhaps it was because he had never tried or wished to be anything else. Mr Alington is a schoolmaster, and has at once taken up the position, though no one could have less assumption, of a great headmaster. He is the author of *A Schoolmaster's Apology*, published in 1914, but what attracted the attention of the public were his famous *Shrewsbury Fables*, which appeared in 1917, and were followed later by *Eton Fables*, of the same kind. The two examples printed here, very beautiful in themselves, will serve to explain the nature of his influence over boys—and men. They will also give an idea to Indian students of the ideals and ethics of an English public school. The fact that the addresses were delivered in the days of the Great War gives them an intensity and pathos which will be appreciated even under circumstances so different as those of an Indian College. In "The Recruiting Office," the work of one who is trying to get volunteers for active service is very skilfully compared with that of him who tries to get boys to serve their Heavenly King—that is, to do what is right.

## XIII

## THE RECRUITING OFFICE

- PAGE  
 155 Your King God  
 155 Shropshire Shrewsbury is the capital of that county.  
 155 "Seventy or eighty," etc. The allusion is to the Sacrament of Confirmation. When a boy (or girl) in the English Church reaches years of discretion he is prepared for Confirmation, as it is called that is, he is instructed in the general principles of his religion. He is then "confirmed." The bishop lays his hand on his head in church, and he thereupon becomes a responsible member of the Church of England. This address was delivered after the ceremony of confirmation had been performed.  
 156 The Enemy: the devil, evil generally  
 156 "Your adversary," etc. 1 Peter v. 8  
 156 "Singing hymns," etc. in the hymn book. The boys use there are many such hymns. For example, *Hymns Ancient & Modern*, No. 229

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158. Elisha's servant: 2 Kings vi .

15. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master ! how shall we do ?

16 And he answered, Fear not . for they that be with us are more than they that be with them

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha

158. Revelation . especially in Chapters xxi and xxii

158. "Greater love," etc St John xv. 13

158. "Thy need," etc . Sir Philip Sidney, when fatally wounded at the battle of Zutphen, and about to drink, gave the water to another wounded soldier with the famous words, "Thy necessity is yet greater than mine" This was in 1586

159 "To skies that knit," etc . from *A Shropshire Lad*, by A E Housman

159 "Onward, Christian Soldiers" . a very well-known hymn

## XIV

### A CONVERSATION

160. Locking-up . the time at which the boys must be in their houses

160. Darwin Buildings . various school buildings are mentioned This particular one is called after Charles Darwin, who was a notable scholar of Shrewsbury Darwin Buildings stands obviously for science

160. Shropshires . the famous regiment, the King's Own Shropshire Light Infantry

160. "And you will list," etc . from *A Shropshire Lad*, by A E Housman

161 Stonewall Jackson . a great Southern General in the American Civil War. He was killed in the battle of Chancellorsville, in 1863 His nickname, which has passed into history, sufficiently attests his sterling qualities

161. The Duke . the great Duke of Wellington

162 "Haven't I held them," etc these lines come from James Russell Lowell's *Biglow Papers*,<sup>1</sup> the second series, No X. It is worth perhaps giving the whole of the two verses

<sup>1</sup> The Headmaster of Eton very kindly supplied me with this reference

" Rat tat-tat tattle thru the street  
 I hear the drummers makin' riot,  
 An' I set thinkin' o' the feet  
 That follered once an' now are quiet,—  
 White feet ez snowdrops innercent,  
 That never knowed the paths o' Satan,  
 Whose comin' step ther's ears thet won't,  
 No, not lifelong, leave off awaitin'  
 Why, hain't I hold 'em on my knee?  
 Didn't I love to see 'em growin',  
 Three likely lads ez wal could be,  
 Hahnsome an' brave an' not tu knowin' ?  
 I set an' look into the blaze  
 Whose natur', jes' like theirn, keeps climbin',  
 Ez long'z it lives, in shinin' ways,  
 An' half despise myself for rhymin' "

162 " Let the ape," etc Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, CXVII

" Arise and fly  
 The reeling faun, the sensual feast,  
 Move upward, working out the beast,  
 And let the ape and tiger die "

162 Bishop Creighton Mandoll Croighton (1813-1901), a wise and witty Churchman and historian Bishop successively of Peterborough and London

163 Edward Grey Sir Edward Grey, now Lord Grey, who was Foreign Minister at the outbreak of war

163 Bethmann Hollweg the German Chancellor who was responsible for the "Scrap of Paper" statement.

165 " When I first went," etc the verses which are found in this essay from this point onwards to the end were written by Dr Alington

167 " Hang theology " this was rather a common saying a few years ago A popular London clergyman was known as " Hang Theology Rogers "

## GEORGE MACAULAY TREVELYAN

MR TREVELYAN is the son of Sir George Otto Trevelyan, the well-known author of the *Life of Lord Macaulay*, who was his uncle He belongs, therefore, to a family of scholars He was educated at Harrow and at Trinity College, Cambridge, of which he became a Fellow, and he married the daughter of Mrs Humphrey Ward, who was, as all the world knows, a niece of Matthew Arnold Mr. Trevelyan is still young as writers go, for he was born in 1876, but he has made a name for himself as a historian *England in the Age of Wycliffe* and *England under the Stuarts* are valuable studies, but in his books on

Italian history, *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic* (1907), *Garibaldi and the Thousand* (1909) and *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy* (1911), he broke new ground and showed great literary power. A *Life of John Bright* followed in 1913, and the same year saw the publication of *Chio*, a collection of essays from which the brilliant piece of fancy which is printed here is taken. The student will notice the skill with which the change in the character and aims of Napoleon is linked to the supposed history of the various other nations. He will also appreciate the clear and confident style in which the narrative is developed, and the dramatic energy of the scene at the close. Of course Mr Trevelyan is aided by our knowledge of the events which really followed the battle of Waterloo, but none the less his essay is a marvel of condensation, and he produces the necessary effect with surprisingly few touches of his brush.

## XV

## IF NAPOLEON HAD WON WATERLOO

- PAGE
- 169 The Convention of Brussels. the supposed agreement which followed Waterloo
- 169 Hôtel de Ville: the picturesque Town Hall of Brussels
- 169 Red-coated patrician: Wellington
169. Blucher: the Prussian commander
169. The Buonaparte of 1796: the Buonaparte of the days of the Italian invasion, when he first astonished Europe
169. Ney: the French Marshal. The bravest of the brave, as he was called. Shot in 1815 for treachery to Louis XVIII
- 170 Mont St Jean: Waterloo
170. Cintra: an allusion to the Convention of Cintra, 1808, by which, much to the dissatisfaction of the English at home, the French, who had been defeated at Rorica and Vimiero, were allowed to evacuate Portugal
- 170 Metternich: the famous Austrian Chancellor who played such an important part in the reactionary policy of Europe between 1815 and 1848
171. Borodino: the great battle of September the 7th, 1812, in the Russian campaign of Napoleon
171. Leipzig: capital of Saxony, scene of a battle between Napoleon and the Allies in 1813
171. Pyramids: the allusions here are to the Egyptian campaign of Buonaparte in 1798. Before the battle of the Pyramids in that year he said in the course of an address to his troops, "Soldiers! from the summit of these Pyramids forty centuries are watching you"
- 171 "Napoleon's physical condition": an allusion to the obscure internal complaint which caused the death of Napoleon at St Helena in 1821



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- 171 Grouchy a French Marshal whose mistakes made Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo a certainty
- 172 Jacobin Napoleon is the "crowned Jacobin" The Jacobins were the members of the Jacobin Club, the more violent of the French revolutionaries Not that Napoleon was a Jacobin, but he owed his throne to the Revolution, and so is spoken of as one
- 173 Catholic emancipation the right to hold office, which was granted to Roman Catholics after a prolonged and violent agitation in 1829
- 173 Lord Byron chosen because Liberal in politics and a great poet of the Romantic school He gave the latter part of his life to the service of the Greeks in their rebellion against the Turks, and died at Missolonghi in 1824
- 173 Napier, Sir William Francis Patrick (1785-1860) was a fine soldier, and the author of the eloquent *History of the Peninsular War* He is chosen because he was something of a Radical as well as a fine soldier, and the generous champion of every cause that he considered worthy He had various distinguished brothers (who are alluded to on p 175), one of whom, Sir Charles, was the well-known conqueror of Scinde
- 173 Thistlewood, Arthur (1770-1820) leader in a plot to murder the ministers at a dinner in 1820
- 173 Trelawny, Edward John (1792-1881) friend of Shelley and Byron Author of *The Adventures of a Younger Son* He helped the Greeks in their War of Independence
- 173 Canning the Tory Prime Minister after Lord Liverpool in 1827 He died the same year Canning was a man of great ability who, however, was somewhat mistrusted by the Tories, as is hinted at in the text
- 173 Anti-Jacobin a name for those opposed to revolutionary methods in politics The allusion is to the periodical called by that name founded by Canning in 1797, which was devoted to the ridicule of any who favoured the French Revolution or its developments The leading contributors were, besides Canning himself, Ellis, Hookham Frere, a good scholar, and William Gifford, afterwards editor of the *Quarterly Review* It was witty and successful
- 173 Shelley, Percy Bysshe was drowned off Spezzia in 1822 He was, it need hardly be said, never in prison But he was an ardent Radical and reformer He wrote a poem in 1819 called "Song to the Men of England," of which the first lines run -

"Men of England, wherefore plough  
For the lords who lay ye low?  
Wherefore weave with toil and care  
The rich robes your tyrants wear?"

PART

He also in 1821 composed his well-known "Lines on hearing the news of the death of Napoleon"

173. Hallam, Arthur Henry (1811-1833) · whose death in 1833 was the occasion of the composition of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* Mentioned here because he was thought to show marks of future eminence
- 174 Grey · Earl Grey, Prime Minister in 1830, carried the great Reform Bill in 1832
- 174 Torquemada, Tomas de (1420-1498) · the Spanish Inquisitor-General
174. Gypsy-Englishman, George Borrow (1803-1811) was an author who wrote books which have had wide popularity He knew many languages, and one of his works, *The Bible in Spain*, tells of his adventures when trying to introduce translations of the Scriptures into that country
- 174 "We must preserve," etc Canning had said in the days of the Holy Alliance that he had called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old, but in saying this he was repeating the more prosaically expressed opinion of Castlereagh of the year before
174. Field of Mars battle-ground Mars was the God of War
175. Murat, Joachim: the famous Marshal, King of Naples, shot in 1815 He was a handsome, dashing cavalry officer, brother-in-law of Napoleon
- 175 "Westphalian"-States · Westphalia had been made a kingdom by Napoleon in 1807, over which his brother Jerome ruled for a time
- 175 The Act of Mediation the declaration of Napoleon which abolished the independence of many of the smaller German States in 1806
- 175 Prince-Bishoprics: Cleves, Trèves and Cologne, on the Rhine
- 175 Code Napoléon: the legal system introduced by Napoleon, based largely on Roman law
- 176 Encyclopædists · the *Encyclopædia* was published in the eighteenth century (1751-1772) at Paris under the direction of *Alembert* and *Diderot* They were aided by men like *Voltaire* and *Rousseau*, and, as most of the writers held Liberal views, the Encyclopædists are usually reckoned as forerunners of the Revolution
- 176 Romantic Movement the revolt against the classical style of writing which came in England, France and Germany about the beginning of the nineteenth century. In France its leaders were *Chateaubriand* and *Mme de Staël*, who were followed by a number of eminent poets, playwrights, critics and novelists, such as *Lamartine*, *A de Vigny*, *Victor Hugo*, *Dumas*, *Balzac* and *Sainte-Beuve*
- 176 Quartier Latin the student quarter of Paris on the left bank of the Seine.

## PAGE

- 176 *Ancien régime*. the days of the Bourbons Alexis de Tocqueville wrote a famous book with the title *l'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*
- 178 Clerical and Liberal forces the Clericals in Italy were those in favour of the temporal power of the Pope, that is, some arrangement by which he should be head, as before the French Revolution, of a small state
- 178 The son of the Genoese doctor Mazzini, who carried on a long series of not always creditable intrigues in favour of Italian unity, and died in England in 1872
- 179 Josephine · Napoleon's first wife, whom he divorced in order to marry the daughter of the Emperor of Austria. In this passage Napoleon is made to imagine himself starting for the Italian campaign of 1796, in which he gained so much glory
- 179 The Revolutionary hymn of France the Marseillaise
- 179 *Chant du départ* literally, Parting Song A famous *Chant du départ* was written in 1794 to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the taking of the Bastille The words were by Chénier and the music by Méhul
- 179 Rue de Rivoli a great street in Paris which runs by the palace of the Tuileries The palace itself was destroyed in the rising of the Commune in 1871.
- 179 *Ouvrier* workman

## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

THIS poet was born in Dublin in 1865, but, like his great countrymen Burke and Goldsmith, he afterwards settled in London. Perhaps as good an example of his verse as can be wished is *The Wind among the Reeds*, which appeared in 1889. He expresses the literary side of the Irish national movement, and *Responsibilities* (1914), which contains the famous statement, "Romantic Ireland's dead and gone," may be read in that connection. Now we have a new Ireland to which all are looking with sympathy, though hardly with hope. Mr Yeats has also written stories and essays, and the specimen which we print here is a good example of his idealism. Those who wish to enter deeper into the spirit of the Irish literary movement should read Matthew Arnold's essays on Celtic Literature, and then follow on with Yeats and perhaps John Millington Synge. The movement suffers from being an army composed chiefly of officers, as the public to appreciate and support is and will be necessarily very limited for some time to come.

## XVI

## THE HAPPIEST OF THE POETS

## PAGE

- 180 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel (1828-1882) poet and painter Ho

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belonged to the Pre-Raphaelite School, which attempted to rescue art from the somewhat dull and conventional condition it had sunk to in the mid-Victorian era

180. "A wind swept valley of the Apennine": Shelley in his "Lines to Jane, with a Guitar" has

"Rocked in that repose divine  
On the wind swept Apennine"

Cf Browning's

"What I love best in the world  
Is a castle, precipice encurled,  
In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine"

181. Earthly Paradise. the name of one of William Morris's poems

181 Loosen the silver cord • Eccles xii 6

181 Michael's trumpet • which ushers in the last day

181. William Morris (1834-1896) the subject of this essay was an artist and a poet and a prominent Socialist. He was educated at Marlborough and at Oxford; but after trying architecture and painting he settled down as a decorator and manufacturer of fine carpets and wall-papers and the like. Incidentally he and those who worked with him did much to raise the standard of public taste in regard to the decoration of houses, and the word "Morris" used as an adjective soon denoted a special type of colour and ornament. In printing too he took great interest, and the products of the Kelmscott Press were very highly appreciated. His poems include the *Defence of Guinevere* (1858), the *Life and Death of Jason* (1867) and *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70), whilst amongst his prose romances are *The House of the Wolfings*, *The Well at the World's End* and *The Story of the Sundering Flood*. His socialistic dreams are expounded in works like *The Dream of John Ball* (1888). Morris was a breezy, many-sided man, able and unselfish. He and those with him were apt to forget that before a new social order is possible a new morality must be introduced. But we owe him nothing but gratitude for the efforts that he made, and his impress on the public mind in the matters of art has been deep and lasting. Whilst his friends Rossetti and Burne Jones strove to teach new and better theories as to painting, Morris broadened their doctrine and showed that all sides of life must be artistic.

182. Malory, Sir Thomas. a fifteenth century writer who translated the *Morte d'Arthur*, and so made the Arthurian legends popular

182 Wagner, Richard (1813-1883) a German composer who has made perhaps the greatest impression on the taste

- of the public in matters of music during the past seventy years His greatest operas, *Tannhauser*, *Lohengrin* and the *Valkyrie*, all deal with medieval legends
- 182 Mackail, John William an Oxford man who held an important post in the Education Department He wrote a life of William Morris in 1899 He was a poet also, and published a verse translation of Homer's *Odyssey*
- 182 Alcestris the wife of Admetus She died to save her husband, according to the beautiful Greek story
- 183 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel see p 262
- 183 Swinburne, Algernon Charles (1837-1909) a great poet Mary Stuart, or Mary Queen of Scots as we commonly call her, formed the subject of three of his tragedies *Chastelard* (1865), *Bothwell* (1874) and *Mary Stuart* (1881)
- 183 Helen Helen of Troy
- 183 Shelley's nightingale

"The folded roses and the violets pale

Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss  
Of heaven with all its planets, the dull car  
Of the night cradled earth, the loneliness

Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere  
And every flower and beam and cloud and wave,  
And every wind of the mute atmosphere,

And every beast stretched in its rugged cave,  
And every bird lulled on its mossy bough,  
And every silver moth fresh from the grave

Which is its cradle—ever from below  
Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far,  
To be consumed within the purest glow

Of one serene and unapproachèd star,  
As if it were a lamp of earthly light,  
Unconscious, as some human lovers are,

Itself how low, how high beyond all height  
The heaven where it would perish!—and every form  
That worshipped in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm  
Girt as with an interminable zone,  
Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion  
Out of their dreams, harmony became love  
In every soul but one "

- 186 The Fall the fall of man as related in the early chapters of Genesis in the Bible
- 186 Hammersmith Morris lived for a time in this part of

PAGE

London; he had also a beautiful old manor-house near Lechlade on the banks of the Thames called Kolmscott 188. Cross - the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the symbol of suffering.

## EDMUND W. GOSSE

MR. GOSSE was born in 1849, and is the son of an eminent zoölogist whose life he has written. From 1867 to 1875 he was an assistant in the British Museum; he then passed to the somewhat humdrum duties of translator to the Board of Trade. In 1904 he became Librarian to the House of Lords, and he retired in the year 1914. In early and middle life he was a poet, but of late years he has devoted himself more to the history and criticism of literature. He has a light touch and is an admirable journalist, his histories of English literature in particular are much brighter than those which students are usually obliged to toil at, and his volumes of collected papers make pleasant reading for odd half-hours. The example given in this volume may induce students to read more of Mr. Gosse's essays. They may occasionally disagree with his verdicts—it is to be hoped they will—but they will find him an agreeable companion, whose opinions rest on solid foundations.

## XVII

## ANDREW LANG

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- 189 Andrew Lang (1844–1912). wrote many books and was eminent in many different walks of literature, for he was a poet, a biographer, an historian, a translator, and an authority on folk-lore. Had he concentrated more he would doubtless have achieved even greater distinction than he did. There is much charm in his verses, and he was the master of a first-rate prose style. He had, too, the gift of humour, which is dangerous as well as valuable. His studies were carried out at St. Andrews and at Oxford, where he was recognised as a brilliant scholar. But most of his work was done in London. His share in the famous translation of Homer brought him great renown, but unfortunately journalism absorbed far too much of his time and energy.
- 190 Tolstoy, Leo (1828–1910) the greatest Russian novelist and moralist of the nineteenth century.
190. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772–1834) poet and metaphysician.
- 190 Merton - Merton College, Oxford, of which Lang was a Fellow.
190. Ariosto (1474–1533) an Italian poet of the Renaissance.

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- 191 Jowett, Benjamin (1817-1893) Master of Balliol College, Oxford, and translator of Plato
- 191 *Culture and Anarchy* by Matthew Arnold
- 191 *Friendship's Garland* by Matthew Arnold
- 192 *The Earthly Paradise* by William Morris (see p 263)
- 192 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel (1828-1882) the pro-Raphaelite painter and poet
- 192 *Lais* short French poems, narrative or lyrical, of the Middle Ages
- 192 *Chansons* songs, lyrical poems
- 192 Pléiade literally the constellation of seven stars known by that name. Here it is used for the group of seven poets Ronsard, Du Bellay, Baif, Dorat, Pontus de Tyard, Etienne Jodelle and Remy Belleau. These men lived in the time of the Renaissance, and introduced great changes into French poetry. The name was borrowed from a similar group, the Alexandrian Pleiad of the third century B.C.
- 193 *Franciade* an epic poem by Ronsard. It was unfinished, and was published in 1572, a few weeks after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.
- 193 Pascal, Blaise (1632-1662) the famous French philosopher and mathematician. A great opponent of the Jesuits, as he showed in his *Lettres Provinciales*.
- 194 Baudelaire, Charles (1821-1867) the famous French poet who wrote *Fleurs du Mal*.
- 194 Gautier, Théophile (1811-1872) a French poet, critic and novelist. His *Emaux et Camées* are well known.
- 194 "Homme heureux," etc. happy man! Man to be envied! He has ever loved only what is beautiful.
- 195 Ibsen, Henrik (1828-1906) the great Norwegian dramatist. His plays are popular in England.
- 195 Hardy, Thomas the greatest living English novelist.
- 195 Dostoevsky, Fedor (1821-1881) Russian psychological novelist.
- 195 Dumas, Alexandre (1803-1870) the famous French novelist, author of *Monte Cristo* and countless other charming stories. He is called *père* (father), to distinguish him from his son, who wrote powerful dramas such as *La Dame aux Camélias*.
- 195 R. L. S. Robert Louis Stevenson.
- 196 "Yellow skirted fays" Milton, "Hymn to the Nativity," xxvi.
- 196 Emerson's "Brahma" The epigram which is referred to begins

" If the red slayer thinks he slays,  
Or if the slain thinks he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep, and pass, and turn again "

## WILLIAM RALPH INGE

DR. INGE, the present Dean of St Paul's, was born in Yorkshire in 1860, and was the son of a clergyman. His mother, too, was the daughter of a well-known clergyman, so that he was from his earliest years very closely connected with the Church of England. He was educated at Eton, and then at King's College, Cambridge, where, after a career of great brilliance, he became a Fellow. From 1884 to 1888 he was a master at Eton. He then accepted a post at Hertford College, Oxford, where for fifteen years he was Fellow and Tutor. He had by this time become a clergyman, and in 1899 he delivered the Bampton Lectures at Oxford on Christian Mysticism. He now left Oxford to become vicar of an important London parish, but he soon, in 1907, returned to Cambridge as Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, there he remained till 1911, when he was promoted to the Deanery of St Paul's. Dr Inge has written books on German and English Mysticism, on Truth and Falsehood, in Religion, on the Church and the Age, and on the Philosophy of Plotinus

## XVIII

## PATRIOTISM

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- 198 Ruskin. see p 233  
 198 Grant Allen, Charles (1848-1899). writer on popular science, and perhaps better known as a novelist  
 198 Ellis, Havelock (b 1859). writer on scientific subjects  
 198 Marcus Aurelius (A D 121-181) the famous stoic Roman Emperor. The greatest of the Antonines  
 198 City of Cecrops. Athens, which was founded by Cecrops.  
 199 Hunt Sarmatians. Marcus Aurelius waged war on these people, who lived from the Baltic southward along the frontier of the Roman Empire  
 199 Peebles. a dull but self important little town in the south of Scotland.  
 199 Nazareth. cf St John: 46  
 199 Pepys, Samuel (1633-1703) author of the celebrated *Diary*, which is referred to here  
 199 Defoe, Daniel (1661?-1731) author of *Robinson Crusoe* and many other works  
 200 Cleveland, John (1613-1658) a Cavalier poet. These lines are from a poem of his called "The Rebel Scot"  
 200 Dr Johnson. see p 245. He was fond of making jokes at the expense of the Scotch. To one who said that there were fine prospects in Scotland, he answered that there were also fine prospects in Iceland, but that the



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finest prospect a Scotchman ever saw was the high-road to London

- 200 Lord Palmerston (1784-1865) · the great statesman, who died whilst he was Prime Minister "The reference is to his attitude as shown in his "Romanus sum" But there is nothing to blame in the spirit he displayed, rather much to praise

- 200 Goldsmith, Oliver (1728-1774) writer of poetry, essays and plays The lines mentioned occur in the *Traveller* The whole passage ought, however, to be quoted.

" Fir'd at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,  
And flies where Britain courts the Western spring,  
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,  
And brighter streams than fam'd Hydaspes glide  
There all around the gentlest breezes stray,  
There gentle music melts on every spray,  
Creation's mildest charms are there combin'd,  
Extremes are only in the master's mind!  
Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state,  
With daring aims irregularly great,  
Pride in their post, defiance in their eye,  
I see the lords of human kind pass by,  
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,  
By forms unfashion'd fresh from Nature's hand,  
Fierce in their native hardness of soul,  
True to imagin'd right, above control,  
While o'en the peasant boasts these rights to scan,  
And learns to venerate himself as man "

- 200 Michelet, Jules (1798-1874): French historian  
200 Smithfield a market in London  
200. "Bête humaine" human nature  
201 McDougall, Patrick Campbell (1806-1867) · Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh  
202 "Mehrer des Reichs": one who enlarges the state  
203 Thucydides · the greatest of the Greek historians These events will be found treated of in his third book The revolt of Mitylene took place in 428 B.C. and the Sicilian expedition in 415 B.C.  
203 Machiavelli, Niccolò (1469-1527) an Italian political writer whose chief work, the *Prince*, is mentioned l.c.  
203 Seneca · see p. 241  
204 Tisson, Jacques René (1724-1816) French writer on medicine  
204 Dufau, Pierre Armand (1793-1877) French writer on political economy  
201 Fournier, Pierre French doctor Author of a well known book on the influence of climate upon man  
201 de Lapouge, G. Vacher de · translator of Hæckel

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204. Richet, Charles R. (b 1850) - French physiologist
- 204 Tiedemann, Dietrich (1745-1803): German philosopher and historian
- 204 Seeck, Otto German historical writer.
- 204 Guerrini Paulus: Italian medical writer
- 204 Kellogg, Edward (1790-1858) American economist
- 204 Starr Jordan, David (b 1851): formerly President of the Leland Stanford Junior University in America
- 205 Castile a Spanish province
- 205 "Immer der Krieg verschlingt die besten" War always devours the best
- 205 "We have fed," etc from *The Song of the Dead*, by Rudyard Kipling
- 205 Socrates see p 233 This passage comes from Plato's *Gorgias*
- 205 Ruskin see p 233 Cf St James iv 1-3
- 206 Bacon, Francis Lord (1561-1626) the great philosopher  
This quotation comes from his essay on "The True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates"
- 207 Æschylus (525-456 B C) the great Greek tragic poet
- 207 Claudian. these lines occur in Claudian's poem "De Laudibus Stiliconis," Book III They have been translated
- " 'Tis she alone who, to her bosom, takes  
The diff'rent nations that she captive makes,  
In her no haughty sway the vanquished find,  
But all her actions shew a parent kind,  
The name of citizens the conquered bear,  
And distant people easy fetters wear "
- 207 Weary Titan Stilicho
- 207 Westphal, Philipp German historical writer
- 208 India the people of India would be the last to agree with the Dean It rather seems as though the English had done something towards creating an Indian nation Whether that will prove an advantage or otherwise to the average man and woman in India remains to be seen
- 208 *Jus gentium* the law of nations based either upon natural rights, the agreement of those acknowledging it, or the command of a common superior, the Emperor
209. Charles V. (1500-1558). the great Emperor who ruled over so large a part of Europe
- 209 Rousseau, Jean Jacques (1712-1778) the great French political philosopher of the eighteenth century.
209. Jena and Auerstädt. two battles of 1806 in which Napoleon crushed the Prussians
209. Tilsit the conference of 1807 between Napoleon and the Czar of Russia was held there
- 209 Vienna, Congress of held in 1814-1815 It settled the future boundaries and sovereignty of the various states of Europe, but the arrangements made soon crumbled.

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- 210 Enclave literally, one piece of land enclosed within another, and independent of it Here it means simply a definite piece of territory with certain boundaries
- 210 Fabian Society a society of Socialists in England
- 211 "But militarism and socialism," etc students who wish to push their studies further here should refer to the works of Lord Acton and Professor Sidgwick
- 212 Nietzsche, Frederick (1844-1900) a German philosopher who advanced the doctrine that "might is right"
- 213 "Duas res plerasque," etc Gaul is much given to two occupations, soldiering and clever talk
- 213 Madame de Stael (1766-1817) an exceedingly clever French woman, the author of *Delphine*, *Corinne*, and a book on Germany, amongst other works She was the daughter of the financier Necker and of Madame Necker, whom as a youth Gibbon had wished to marry Madame de Stael's own daughter married the French statesman the Duc de Broglie
- 213 The Abbé Noel professor in the University of Louvain.
- 214 Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753) famous as a philosopher and also as a philanthropist He may be said to have founded a system of philosophy He was born in Ireland, and became Bishop of Cloyne in 1734 His *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* and *Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* are his most famous books
- 214 "Last August" • August 1914
- 214 Abraham Lincoln see p 232
- 215 "St Paul's willingness," etc see Romans ix 3
- 215 "Lowell's Hosea Biglow" James Russell Lowell (1819-1891) His *Biglow Papers*, from which this is an extract, were published at the time of the controversies which ultimately resulted in the Civil War of 1861-1865
- 216 "À bas la patrie" down with the Fatherland!
- 218 Molière, Jean Baptiste Poquelin (1622-1673) the great French writer of comedies The quotation means "The friend of everyone in general is not at all my kind of man"
- 218 Brunetière, Ferdinand see p 250 This quotation means, "Neither nature nor history has intended that all men should be brethren"
- 218 Paul Bourget a great French novelist born in 1852 *André Cornélis* is perhaps one of his most characteristic stories
- 219 Mazzini, Giuseppe . see p 262
- 220 "Those wounds heal," etc Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, III iii 229
- 220 "Breathes there," etc • from Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, V 1
- 220 "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem," etc Psalm cxxxvii 5

## GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

MR CHESTERTON's face and figure are very familiar in England at the present day, as he has often been caricatured. This, at all events, shows that he commands a certain amount of attention, and that the public wishes to know what he is like. He was born in 1874 in London, and educated at St Paul's School, the school of Milton. Later he studied art and became an art critic. He has, however, written essays and books of many different kinds, but the critical spirit is seldom absent. As a stylist Mr Chesterton is fond of epigram. He is very earnest, and his didactic purpose reflects itself in his prose. He seems like the master teaching a class of boys who will not understand at once what is so clear to him. His books on Browning and Dickens are good examples of his work on a more ambitious scale than the essay. He writes poetry as well as prose, and is a frequent contributor to the newspapers.

## XIX

## SIMPLICITY AND TOLSTOY

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 222 Apollo Belvedere. the Belvedere is a museum at the Vatican, and the famous statue of Apollo there is in consequence always known as the Apollo Belvedere  
 223 Beating swords into ploughshares. Isaiah ii 4 For the opposite see Joel iii 10  
 223 Philistine unartistic, commonplace, vulgar  
 223 Ibsen, Henrik (1828-1906) the great Norwegian dramatist. He was a realist of the deepest dye, and his plays leave as a rule a painful, almost horrible, impression on the mind. Good examples are *The Doll's House* and *Ghosts*  
 223 Maeterlinck, Maurice. Belgian author and dramatist, born in 1862  
 223 Whitman, Walt. see p 235  
 224 "Thou art," etc. Isaiah xlv 15, "Verily thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour"  
 224 Solomon the king of Israel. "Solomon in all his glory", see St Matthew vi 29  
 225 R. Nisbet Bain: an authority on the history of Northern Europe  
 226 "Turn the cheek to the smiter" cf Lamentations iii 30, and St Luke vi 29  
 226 "The Sermon on the Mount": words of Christ which are recorded in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of St Matthew  
 227 "By this sign they conquer". a reference to the vision of Constantine when he saw the Cross  
 227 Quakers a religious sect in England founded by George Fox (1624-1690). They are few in numbers, but wealthy, and are opposed to war and in favour of simplicity of life

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227. St George the patron saint of England He was a prince of Cappadocia who perished in the Diocletian persecution in A D 303 He is represented (as on coins) slaying a dragon
- 227 Nero the cruel Emperor of Rome who reigned from A D 54 to 68
- 227 Edward Lear, a popular writer of humorous verse The *Book of Nonsense*, from which this extract comes, reached its twenty-seventh edition in 1889
- 227 "Breaking of seals," etc Cf. Revelations v
- 228 Christian Socialism in a certain sense Christian Socialism is as old as Christianity, but the movement more definitely connected with the term grew up in the early part of the nineteenth century Its great supporters then were men like Kingsley and Frederick Denison Maurice Later it has been championed by Canon Scott Holland and others
- 228 Neo-Platonism the philosophy represented by such men as Plotinus It had its beginnings at Alexandria in the third century A D
- 228 Armageddon cf. Revelations xvi 16 It is often used as symbolical of a spiritual conflict
- 228 Ragnarok Ragnarok, "the twilight of the Gods," is where in Norse mythology Loke, the God of Evil, broke loose from his bonds
- 229 Dr Watts (1674-1748) a divine and hymn-writer
- 229 Moody, Dwight Lyman (1837-1899) a popular American Evangelist
- 229 Sankey, Ira David (1840-1908) a composer of hymns, who helped Dr Moody in his missions
- 229 "The Red Sea," etc two miracles recorded in the Old Testament
- 229 "Oriental anecdotes" the records of the sayings of Jesus Christ
- 230 "The sight," etc - see St Luke xix 41 Cf. xiii 34, and St Matthew xxiii 37
- 230 "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile" St John i 47
- 231 "Except with His finger in the sand" - St John viii 6. "But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not"
- 231 Calvary: the hill near Jerusalem on which Jesus Christ was crucified
- 231 "The earth gaped," etc - cf St Matthew xxvii 45, St Mark xv 33; St Luke xxiii 44, 45

